

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Budget options in this guide command between €40 and €70 a night for a double room in a hotel with private shower and toilet. Bar the odd few that lurk on the coast, few hotels these days have shared bathroom facilities on the corridor. Midrange options cover the €70 to €149 price range, and top end entails anything upwards of €150. With the exception of prices for *chambre d'hôte* and *maison d'hôte* accommodation, rates in this guide don't include breakfast unless noted otherwise. Hotels

charge anything from €7 to €30 per person for breakfast.

In July and August don't even contemplate the coast unless you have a reservation or are prepared to pay a fortune for the few rooms available. The exception is rock-bottom budget accommodation, especially in Nice, which rarely gets booked up weeks in advance – but is full most days by noon. Tourist offices can tell you where rooms are available. Some midrange hotels only accept reservations accompanied by a credit-card number. Most budget joints demand payment upon arrival.

Local authorities impose a *taxe de séjour* (tourist tax) on each visitor in their jurisdiction, usually only enforced in the high season (Easter to September). At this time prices charged are €0.20 to €1.50 per person higher than posted rates.

Camping

The region has camp sites galore, most open March or April to September or October.

Stars reflect facilities and amenities. Separate tariffs are charged for people, tents or caravans, and vehicles. Many places have *forfaits* (fixed-price deals) for two people with tent and car. Camp-site receptions are often closed during the day; the best time to call is early morning or evening.

Camping à la ferme (camping farm) is coordinated by Gîtes de France (p400).

Camping sauvage (wild camping) is illegal but tolerated in some places. The odd hostel allows travellers to pitch in the back garden.

Chambres & Maisons d'Hôtes

The best way to sleep, eat and dream Provence! A *chambre d'hôte* is a B&B, the most

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.LonelyPlanet.com. You'll find the true, insider low-down on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- France uses the metric system for weights and measures.
- Plugs have two round pins (bring an international adapter), and the electric current is 220V at 50Hz AC.
- Videos in France work on the PAL system.
- Pick up regional news, views, chat and gossip with the Monte Carlo-based, English-language Riviera Radio (106.3MHz FM in Monaco, 106.5MHz FM in France; www.rivieraradio.mc); and the BBC World Service with Radio France Internationale (RFI; 100.5MHz FM and 100.9MHz FM; www.rfi.fr).
- French radio stations include Radio Provence (103.6MHz and 102.9MHz FM), Radio Vaucluse (100.4MHz FM), Radio Luberon (88.6MHz FM) and Cannes Radio (91.5MHz FM). On the coast, music-charged Nice Music (102.3 FM) is the sound.
- Read regional news in French in *Nice Matin* (www.nicematin.fr) and *La Provence* (www.la-provence-presse.fr); and in English in the *Riviera Reporter* (www.riviera-reporter.com) and *Riviera Times* (www.rivieratimes.com).
- Switch on the box with private French TV stations TF1 and M6; or state-run France 2, France 3 and 5 (Arte after 7pm).

upmarket and/or stylish of which are increasingly tagging themselves as a *maison d'hôte*. A feast of a breakfast is included in the price, and many serve a delicious dinner of several courses around a shared table (known as *table d'hôte*) for €15 to €30, usually including apéritif and wine. Many are in beautiful chateaux, age-old *mas* (Provençal farmhouses) or *moulins* (mills) and are highly sought-after.

Dozens of *chambres d'hôtes* and *maison d'hôtes* are listed in this guide; otherwise, tourist offices keep lists, contact Gîtes de France (p400) or try:

Allo Chambres d'Hôtes (☎ 08 91 16 22 22) The number to call for last-minute vacancies.

Avignon & Provence (www.avignon-et-provence.com) Exceptional online accommodation guide.

Fleurs de Soleil (www.fleursdesoleil.fr) Quality label awarded to *chambres d'hôtes*; national guide online and in print (€12).

Maisons d'Hôtes de Charme (www.guidesdecharme.com) France-specific guidebook featuring properties with bags of charm, published annually online and in print (€22).

Chateaux

In the Côtes de Provence wine region, there are several *domaines viticoles* (wine-growing estates) – invariably arranged around a gorgeous chateau – where you can stay. In addition to a comfortable bed, hearty breakfast and, upon request, an evening meal of fabulous proportions, many let you taste wine and

tour their vineyards. The Maison des Vins in Les Arcs-sur-Argens (p359) has a list.

Should you wish to buy or dream about a chateau or *domaine viticole* of your own, contact oenologist Stéphane Paillard at **Le Bureau Viticole** (☎ 04 90 92 48 74; www.bureauviticole.fr; 10 blvd Mirabeau, 13210 St-Rémy de Provence), a specialist estate agent run by upmarket real-estate agent **Émile Garcin** (www.emilegarcin.fr), with offices in St-Rémy de Provence and Ménerbes.

The Riviera's *belle époque* follies, celebrity real estate and various other properties of dreamy proportions are handled by **John Taylor** (www.john-taylor.fr).

Hostels

There are a fair few hostels sprinkled along the coast, including at Cap d'Antibes, Cap d'Ail, Cassis, Fréjus, Marseille, Nice and near Stes-Maries de la Mer; in the mountains at La Foux d'Allos; and towards the west in Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, Arles, Nîmes and Fontaine de Vaucluse.

You can expect to pay between €11 and €22 per night (occasionally this includes breakfast and/or sheets), plus €3/3.50/10 for sheets/breakfast/dinner. Not all hostels have kitchen facilities. Most don't accept telephone reservations.

Affiliates of the **Fédération Unie des Auberges de Jeunesse** (FUJ; www.fuaj.org) and the **Ligue Française pour les Auberges de Jeunesse** (LFA; www.auberges-de-jeunesse.com) require an HI card.

Hotels

Hotels have one to four stars and charge €7 (budget and midrange) to €30 (top end) extra per person for breakfast. Rooms with bathtubs cost more than rooms with showers. Beds usually tout neck-aching, hot-dog-shaped bolsters – you'll find *oreillers* (regular pillows) hidden in a cupboard in the room.

In many hotels single rooms don't exist, as such; rather, doubles are flogged as singles. Triples and quads often have two double beds. Out of season, most hotels close for at least two weeks for their *congé annuel* (annual closure). Ski-resort hotels in Haute-Provence only open for the winter ski season and a couple of months in summer for walkers.

Budget hotels tend to charge the same rates year-round. Move into the midrange price bracket and there are three sets of seasonally adjusted prices: low season (October/November to February/March), midseason (March to May and September/October) and high season (June to September). Certain festivals (Festival d'Avignon; Cannes film festival; the Nîmes *férias*) bump up prices beyond belief. Reliable bets in the midrange price range are hotels affiliated to **Logis de France** (www.logisdefrance.com).

Many four-star hotels languish in traditional properties: farmhouses, *monastères* (monasteries), *moulins à huile* (oil mills), *prieurés* (prieories) or restored Cistercian *abbayes* (abbeys). Lakes, rose gardens and olive groves pepper the vast grounds of these exclusive estates where a night's sleep costs anything upwards of €150. **Châteaux & Hotels de France** (www.chateauxhotels.com) and **Relais & Châteaux** (www.relaischateaux.fr) are two umbrella organisations under which these exclusive and expensive hotels often fall.

Refuges & Gîtes d'Étapes

This kind of accommodation studs the Parc National de Mercantour and Haute-Provence, where undeveloped rural areas are rife.

Gîtes d'étapes (basic dorm rooms) tend to be in towns and villages popular with walkers and climbers; *refuges* (simple mountain shelters) are in isolated wildernesses, often accessible only by foot.

Both are basic and equipped with bunks, mattresses and blankets, but not sheets. Nightly rates start at €10 per person. Cooked meals are occasionally available.

To reserve a *refuge* bed, get in contact with the **Club Alpin Français des Alpes-Maritimes** (Map pp262-3;

☎ 04 93 62 59 99; <http://cafnice.org> in French; 14 av Mirabeau, F-06000 Nice).

Rental Accommodation

Tourist offices have lists of self-catering studios, apartments and villas to rent on a short- (one week) or long-term (several months) basis. The most sought-after properties are booked a year in advance.

Many extra-charming *gîtes ruraux* (self-catering accommodation) – a century-old *mas* in an olive grove or cherry-tree orchard, say, or converted farm stables surrounded by a menagerie of farmyard animals – are represented by **Gîtes de France** (www.gites-de-france-paca.com), an organisation that liaises between owners and renters. Amenities range from basic bathroom facilities and a simple kitchenette (with oven, hot plates and fridge), to a bathroom, fully equipped kitchen, washing machine, TV, telephone, garden and pool. Linen is never provided, but can be rented. *Gîtes panda* are in regional and national parks.

Bookings can be made online or through a regional Gîtes de France office:

Alpes de Haute-Provence (☎ 04 92 31 30 40; www.gites-de-france-04.fr; rond-point du 11 Novembre, F-04000 Digne-les-Bains)

Alpes-Maritimes (Map pp262-3; ☎ 04 92 15 21 30; www.gites-de-france-alpes-maritimes.com; 57 promenade des Anglais, BP 21614, F-06011 Nice)

Bouches du Rhône (☎ 04 90 59 49 39; www.gitesdefrance13.visitprovence.com; Domaine du Vergon, F-13370 Mallemort)

Var (☎ 04 94 50 93 93; www.gites-de-france-var.fr; rond-point du 4 Decembre 1974, BP 215, F-83006 Draguignan)

Vaucluse (Map p160; ☎ 04 90 85 45 00; www.gites-de-france-vaucluse.asso.fr in French; place Campana, BP 164, F-84008 Avignon)

ACTIVITIES

The wealth of outdoor activities on offer in the region is great; see p80.

BUSINESS HOURS

On Sunday, a bakery is usually about all that is open (in the morning only), and public transport services are less frequent. On weekdays, village shops (including bakeries) close for a long lunch between 2pm and 4pm. Hotels, restaurants, cinemas, cultural institutions and shops close for their *congé annuel* (annual holiday) in winter.

Some hotels, museums and *chambres d'hôtes* only open from *Pâques à la Toussaint* (Easter to All Saints' Day, 1 November). Many places to eat and/or drink in Nice and Marseille brandish 'open nonstop' signs. Far from meaning they open 24 hours, it simply means the place doesn't close for lunch.

Standard hours for commercial banks, museums, pharmacies, post offices, shops, restaurants and supermarkets are listed on the Quick Reference page on cover flap of this book. Places to eat close for two consecutive days a week, often Sunday, Monday and/or Tuesday. Opening hours for bars, pubs and clubs fluctuate wildly.

CHILDREN Practicalities

Most car-hire firms provide children's car seats for around €30 per rental, but the concept of organising a car seat in a taxi is an alien one.

Many hotels can provide cots (free) or an extra bed (€15 to €40), but families travelling with younger children will find *chambre d'hôte* accommodation more hospitable. Pick one that serves evening meals, too, allowing you to dine in peace while the kids sleep upstairs with a baby monitor (bring your own). For kiddie-dining practicalities see p407.

Cobbled streets, ultranarrow pavements in old towns and bumper-to-bumper parked cars can make strolling with a pushchair something of an obstacle course. Supermarkets and pharmacies sell disposable nappies (diapers) and high-factor sun-protection creams.

Tourist offices maintain lists of babysitters and crèches. For region-specific information read *Le Curieux, Monaco-French Riviera* for *Le Curieux*, by Helen Misseri and Elisabeth Moati, a bilingual French-English book by two mothers living on the coast; or the annual bilingual *Family First: Life & Holidays with Children on the French Riviera* (www.familyfirst.fr), an excellent listings guide crammed with useful information for parents, covering everything from kid-friendly hotels and restaurants to pools, parks and playgrounds.

Sights & Activities

Kids are well-catered for: a water park and aquarium with killer whales in Biot (p318); waterslides at the Niagara Parc Nautique near La Môle (p363); and tortoises at the Village des Tortues in the Massif des Maures (p362)

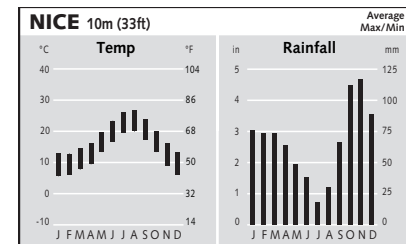
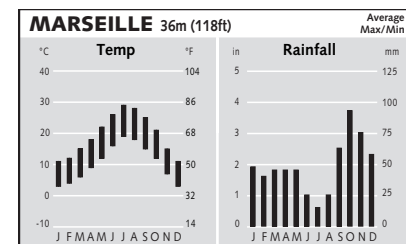
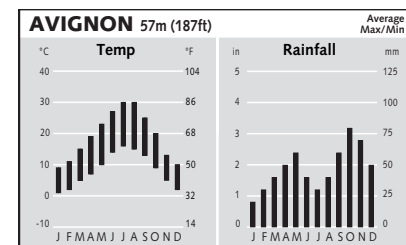
are but some ways to win the heart of a howling child. Museumwise, try Monaco's Muséum Océanographique (p386).

The Parc National du Mercantour (p248), the Office National des Forêts (ONF) and tourist offices organise nature walks for children.

Canoeing beneath the Pont du Gard (p200); horse riding in the Camargue (p137); island cycling on Porquerolles (there are pedal-powered chariots for kids too small to pedal themselves; p369); snorkelling off Port-Cros' shores (p369) or along an underwater nature trail at the Domaine du Rayol (p364); in-line skating in Nice and Marseille (p269 and p103); or skiing in Haute-Provence (p248) are all outdoor thrills.

CLIMATE CHARTS

Mistral aside (p72), the region enjoys a temperate climate with mild winters. For climatic considerations see p20.



COURSES

Art, food, wine, language, film – the best of France is there for the learning. The website www.edufrance.fr/en has information about higher education, and www.studyabroadlinks.com can help you find specific courses and summer programmes.

Arts & Crafts

Painting lavender landscapes is old hat now. Courses these days zoom in on everything from mosaic work to ceramics; see p60.

Cooking & Gardening

For cooking courses, see p52. For gardening courses, see p77.

Language

There are dozens of French language schools; tourist offices have lists.

Alliance Française Marseille (☎ 04 96 10 24 60; www.alliancefrmarseille.org; 310 rue Paradis, F-13008 Marseille) Extensive and intensive courses (six to 20 hours' per week), written French workshops, two- to 12-week linguistic and cultural courses (20 hours tuition per week costs €375/665 for two/four weeks), sport and study courses (20 hours' tuition per week plus sailing or diving); and arranges accommodation (€320 to €550 per month).

Alliance Française Nice (☎ 04 93 62 67 66; www.alliance-francaise-nice.com; 2 rue de Paris, F-06000 Nice) Extensive/intensive courses (2½/four hours' tuition per day costs €430/660 per week), evening classes, private lessons (€40 per hour), French for business, and thematic literary, gastronomic, music and painting workshops.

Association de Langue Française d'Avignon (☎ 04 90 85 86 24; www.alfavignon.com; 4 impasse Romagnoli, F-84000 Avignon) Two-week course with 15 hours' tuition per week (€500) and B&B accommodation (€112 per week); French for au pairs and resident foreigners.

Centre Méditerranéen d'Études Françaises (☎ 04 93 78 21 59; www.centremed.monte-carlo.mc; chemin des Oliviers, F-06320 Cap d'Ail) School dating from 1952, idyllically set in a coastal park with open-air amphitheatre designed by Jean Cocteau (p284); two-week French language and civilisation courses.

Crea Langues (☎ 04 92 77 74 58; www.crealangues.com; Monastère de Segres, F-04360 Moustiers-Ste-Marie) Language training in a cloistered monastery, with hiking, canyoning, cycling, painting and gastronomy options (€130 to €240); one-/two-week course €735/1175 plus €325/715 for full-board monastery accommodation.

International House (☎ 04 93 62 60 62; www.ih-nice.com; 62 rue Giuffredo, F-06000 Nice) One-/two-week courses with 20 lessons (45 minutes) a week cost €215/430, plus €45 enrolment fee; private 45-minute

lessons (€50), French for executives and other courses.

Arranges half-board accommodation with host family (€186/162 in single/shared room).

Université de Provence (☎ 04 42 95 32 17; www.univ-mrs.fr/wscefee; 29 av Robert Schumann, F-13621 Aix-en-Provence) A hot choice in lovely Aix: academic language and methodology courses, as well as writing workshops and basic French classes with painting, cinema, art, song and multimedia options.

Université Nice-Sophia Antipolis (☎ 04 93 37 53 94; <http://portail.unice.fr> in French; 98 blvd Édouard Herriot, BP 3209, F-06204 Nice) Summer French-language courses at Nice-Sophia Antipolis university; online, follow the 'International' link to get to the Language Institute of the Université Internationale d'Été.

Université Paul Cézanne d'Aix Marseille III (Université d'Aix Marseille III; ☎ 04 42 21 70 90; www.univ-u-3mrs.fr in French; 23 rue Gaston de Saporta, F-13625 Aix-en-Provence) Four-week intensive courses at the university's Institute of French Studies for Foreign Students.

CUSTOMS

Goods brought in and exported within the EU incur no additional taxes, provided duty has been paid somewhere within the EU and the goods are for personal consumption. There is no longer duty-free shopping within the EU; you have to be leaving Europe.

Coming from non-EU countries, duty-free allowances (for adults) are: 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 1L of spirits, 2L of wine, 50g of perfume, 250ml of eau de toilette and other goods up to the value of €183. Anything over the limit must be declared and tax may be charged.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Beaches

Larger beaches on the Côte d'Azur have a *poste de secours* (safety post) during the summer season, staffed by lifeguards. In water-sport areas, a section of the sea is always sectioned off for swimmers. Note the colour of the flag flying before diving in: green means it is safe to swim; yellow means bathing is risky; red means that swimming is forbidden; and purple means the water is polluted.

Extreme Weather

During the balmy days of June and the steamy days of July and August, it is hard to believe that the region can be freezing cold when the mistral (p72) strikes.

Thunderstorms in the mountains and on the hot southern plains can be sudden,

violent and dangerous. Check the weather report before embarking on a long walk; even then, be prepared for a sudden change in the weather. Storms are common in August and September.

Forest Fires

Forest fires are common in July and August when the sun is hot and the land is dry. Such fires spread incredibly quickly – between 20m and 30m per minute. Between 1 July and the second Sunday in September, forest authorities close high-risk areas. Never walk in a closed zone. Tourist offices can tell you if a walking path is closed. If you come across a fire, call the **fire brigade** (☎ 18).

Forests are crisscrossed with road tracks enabling fire crews to penetrate quickly. These roads, signposted DFCI (*Défense de la Forêt Contre l'Incendie*; Forest Defence against Fire), are closed to private vehicles but you can follow them on foot.

Lighting a campfire is forbidden. Barbecues, even in private gardens, are forbidden in many areas in July and August.

Poisonous Mushrooms

Wild-mushroom picking is a national pastime. Pick by all means, but don't eat anything until it has been positively identified as safe by a pharmacist. Most pharmacies in the region offer a mushroom-identification service.

Rivers & Lakes

Major rivers are connected to hydroelectric power stations operated by the national electricity company, Electricité de France (EDF). Water levels rise dramatically if the EDF opens a dam. White-water sports on the River Verdon of the Chaudanne Dam are forbidden when the water flow is less than 5 cu metres per second. For information on water levels and dam releases call ☎ 04 92 83 62 68.

Swimming is prohibited in lakes that are artificial and have steep, unstable banks (ie Lac de Ste-Croix, southwest of the Gorges du Verdon; and Lac de Castillon and the adjoining Lac de Chaudanne, northeast of the gorges). Sailing, windsurfing and canoeing are restricted to flagged areas.

Theft

Theft – from backpacks, pockets, cars, trains, laundrettes, beaches – is widespread, par-

ticularly along the Côte d'Azur. Keep an eagle eye on your bags, especially at train and bus stations, on overnight train rides, in tourist offices and on beaches.

Always keep your money, credit cards, tickets, passport, driving licence and other important documents in a money belt, worn inside your trousers or skirt. Keep enough money for the day in a separate wallet. Theft from hotel rooms is less common but it's still not a great idea to leave your life's belongings in your room. In hostels lock your nonvaluables in a locker provided and cart your valuables along. Upmarket hotels have *coffres* (safes).

When swimming at the beach or taking a dip in the pool, have members of your party take turns sitting with packs and clothes. On the Prado beaches in Marseille, keeping your valuables in one of the free (staffed) lockers provided is a good idea.

Motorists in Marseille, Nice and other larger cities should keep their doors locked when stopped at traffic lights; it is not unheard of for aspiring bandits to open the door to your car, ask you what the time is and, at the same time, scan you and your car for valuables.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Billets Jumelés

Many museums and monuments sell *billets jumelés* (combination tickets), which cover admission to more than one sight and offer a considerable saving. Some cities have museum passes that cut sightseeing costs further.

Carte Musées Côte d'Azur

The Carte Musées Côte d'Azur (French Riviera Museum Pass) gives card-holders unlimited admission to 62 museums along the coast. A one-/three-day pass costs €10/17 (no reduced rates) and a seven-day pass valid for seven days within a 15-day period is €27. Passes are sold at museums, tourist offices and FNAC stores.

Hostel Card

You need an annual Hostelling International (HI) card to stay at official youth hostels, although some let you in with a one-night stamp (€1.50). HI cards costing €10.70/15.25 for those under/over 26 are sold at HI-affiliated hostels and national **Youth Hostelling Associations** (YHA; www.ihf.org).

Seniors Card

Those aged over 60 or 65 are entitled to discounts on public transport, museum admission fees, public theatres and so on. The Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer (SNCF) issues the Carte Senior (€53; www.senior-sncf.com) to those aged over 60, which gives reductions of 25% to 50% on train tickets, valid for one year.

Student, Youth & Teacher Cards

An International Student Identity Card (ISIC; €12) pays for itself through half-price admissions and discounted air and ferry tickets etc. Many stockists stipulate a maximum age, usually 24 or 25.

If you're under 26 but not a student you can buy an International Youth Travel Card (IYTC; €12), which entitles you to much the same discounts as an ISIC.

Teachers, professional artists, museum conservators and journalists are admitted to some museums for free. Bring proof of affiliation, for example, an International Teacher Identity Card (ITIC; €17) or official press card.

All three cards are administered by the **International Student Travel Confederation** (www.istc.org) and issued by student travel agencies and online at www.carteisic.com. Within the region, try branches of **Voyages Wasteels** (www.wasteels.fr in French; Aix-en-Provence ☎ 04 42 26 68 46; 5bis cours Sextius; Marseille ☎ 04 95 09 30 60; 67 La Canabière; Nice ☎ 04 93 03 60 90; 48 rue de France).

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

French Embassies & Consulates

France's diplomatic and consular representatives abroad are listed on the website www.france.diplomatie.fr. For some of the following countries, additional consulates exist.

Australia Canberra (☎ 02-6216 0100; www.ambafrance-au.org; 6 Perth Av, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney Consulate (☎ 02-9261 5779; www.consulfrance-sydney.org; Level 26, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney, NSW 2000)
Belgium Brussels (☎ 02-548 8700; www.ambafrance-be.org; 65 rue Ducale, Brussels 1000); Brussels Consulate (☎ 02-229 8500; www.consulfrance-bruxelles.org; 12a place de Louvain, Brussels 1000)

Canada Ottawa (☎ 613-789 1795; www.ambafrance-ca.org; 42 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ont K1M 2C9); Toronto Consulate (☎ 416-925 8041; www.consulfrance-toronto.org; 2 Bloor Est, Suite 2200, Toronto M4W 1A8)

Germany Berlin (☎ 030-590 039 000; www.botschaft-frankreich.de; Pariser Platz 5, Berlin 10117); Munich Consu-

late (☎ 089-419 4110; www.consulfrance-munich.de; Heimeranstrasse 31, 3rd fl, Munich 80339)

Ireland (☎ 01-277 5000; www.ambafrance-ie.org; 36 Ailesbury Rd, Dublin 4)

Italy (☎ 06-686 0111; www.ambafrance-it.org; Piazza Farnese 67, 00186 Rome)

Netherlands The Hague (☎ 070-312 5800; www.ambafrance-nl.org; Smidsplein 1, 2514 BT Den Haag); Amsterdam Consulate (☎ 020-530 6969; www.consulfrance-amsterdam.org; Vijzelgracht 2, 1017 HR Amsterdam)

New Zealand (☎ 04-384 2555; www.ambafrance-nz.org; 13th fl, Rural Bank Bldg, 34-42 Manners St, PO Box 11-343, Wellington)

South Africa Pretoria Embassy Apr-Jan (☎ 012-425 1600; www.ambafrance-za.org; 250 Melk St, New Muckleneuk, 0181 Pretoria); Pretoria Embassy Feb-Mar (☎ 021-422 1338; 78 Queen Victoria St, 8001 Cape Town)

Spain Madrid (☎ 91-423 8900; www.ambafrance-es.org; Calle de Salustiano Olozaga 9, 28001 Madrid); Barcelona Consulate (☎ 93-270 3000; www.consulfrance-barcelona.org; Ronda Universitat 22, 08007 Barcelona)

Switzerland Berne (☎ 031-359 2111; www.ambafrance-ch.org; Schosshaldenstrasse 46, 3006); Zürich Consulate (☎ 01-268 8585; www.consulfrance-zurich.org; Signaustasse 1, 8008 Zürich)

UK London (☎ 020-7073 1000; www.ambafrance-uk.org; 58 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7JT); London Consulate (☎ 020-7073 1200; www.consulfrance-londres.org; 21 Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2EN); London Visa Section (☎ 020-7073 1250; 6a Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW)

US Washington (☎ 202-944 6000; www.ambafrance-us.org; 4101 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007); New York Consulate (☎ 212-606 3600; www.consulfrance-newyork.org; 934 Fifth Av, New York, NY 10021)

Monégasque Embassies

Monaco's diplomatic missions abroad include the following:

Belgium (☎ 02-347 4987; ambassade.monaco@skynet.be; place Guy d'Arezzo, B-1180 Brussels)

Germany (☎ 30 26 39 033; ambassade.monaco@aol.com; Klingelhöferstr 7, D-10785 Berlin)

Spain (☎ 91 578 20 48; ambmonacomad@hotmail.com; Calle Villanueva 12, ES-28001 Madrid)

Switzerland (☎ 031 356 28 58; ambassademonaco@bluewin.ch; Hallwylstr 34, CP 3000, CH-3005 Berne 6)

USA (☎ 212-286 0500; www.monaco-consulate.com; 565 Fifth Ave, 23rd fl, New York NY 10017)

Consulates in Provence & Monaco

Foreign embassies are in Paris, although some countries have a consulate in Nice, Marseille and/or Monaco:

Belgium Marseille (☎ 04 96 10 11 16; 75 cours Pierre Puget); Nice (Map pp262-3; ☎ 04 93 87 79 56; 5 rue Gabriel Faure); Monaco (☎ 377-93 50 59 89; 13 av des Castelans)

Canada Nice (Map pp262-3; ☎ 04 93 92 93 22; 10 rue Lamartine); Monaco (Map p384; ☎ 377-97 70 62 42; Palais de la Scala, Bureau No 1178, 1 av Henri Dunant)

France (Map p384; ☎ 377-92 16 54 60; www.consulatfrance.mc in French; Le Roc Fleuri, 1 rue du Ténao, Monaco)

Germany Marseille (☎ 04 91 16 75 20; 338 av du Prado) Nice (☎ 04 93 83 55 25; Le Mintoaire, 34 av Henri Matisse); Monaco (☎ 377-97 97 49 65; dieter-spaethe@monaco377.com; 2 chemin du Ténao)

Italy Marseille (☎ 04 91 18 49 18; 56 rue d'Alger) Nice (☎ 04 93 14 40 96; 74 blvd Gambetta); Monaco (☎ 377-93 50 22 71; L'Annonciade, 17 av de l'Annonciade)

Monaco (☎ 04 91 33 30 21; 3 place aux Huiles, Marseille)

Netherlands Marseille (☎ 04 91 25 66 64; 139 av de Toulon); Nice (☎ 04 93 87 52 94; 14 rue Rossini); Monaco (☎ 377-92 05 15 02; Aigue Marine, entrance A, 24 av de Fontvieille)

Spain Monaco (☎ 377 93 30 24 98; 20 blvd des Moulins)

Switzerland Marseille (☎ 04 96 10 14 10; 7 rue d'Arcole); Monaco (☎ 377 93 15 58 82; 2 av de Grande Bretagne)

UK Marseille (Map p98; ☎ 04 91 15 72 10; 24 av du Prado); Monaco (☎ 377-93 50 99 54; 33 blvd Princesse Charlotte)

US Marseille (Map p98; ☎ 08 10 26 46 26, 04 91 54 92 00; www.amb-usa.fr; place Varian Fry); Nice (Map p262-3; ☎ 04 93 88 82 61; 7 av Georges V)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The region boasts a spicier-than-spicy cultural calendar. Festivals celebrate everything from a historical or folklore tradition to performing art or the region's most beloved pastimes (food and wine).

Destination-specific festivals are listed in the relevant regional chapters. For a complete listing, pick up *Terre de Festivals* (follow the link from www.regionpaca.fr), a meaty 240-page festival-listing guide available for free at most tourist offices, or visit www.cotedazur-en-fetes.com.

Regional festivals:

May & June

May Day Workers' day is celebrated on 1 May with trade-union parades and diverse protests. People give each other *muguet* (lily of the valley) for good luck. No-one works (except waiters and *muguet* sellers).

Fête de la Musique (www.fetedelamusique.culture.fr) Bands, orchestras, crooners, buskers and spectators regionwide take to the streets on 21 June for France's national celebration of music.

Avignon Blues Festival (http://lavoixdblues.free.fr in French) Held from the end of June to mid-August, six weeks of mellow blues in the papal city, Avignon.

Chansons des Pays du Verdon (http://lavoixdblues.free.fr in French) Festival dedicated to traditional Provençal song, dance and chants, held from the end of June to early August in Valensole, Rians and elsewhere around the Verdon.

July

Festival des Nuits de l'Enclave Three weeks of jazz, classical music, theatre and contemporary dance in the Enclave des Papes in July, in and around Valréas.

Les Musicales du Luberon Three-week bonanza of classical music concerts in churches and abbeys in Cavailon, Ménerbes and other Luberon villages in July.

Festival International de Quatros à Cordes du Luberon (www.festival-quatros-luberon.com in French) Luberon's international chamber music festival with concerts held in churches in Roussillon, Goult, La Roque d'Anthéron and L'Isle sur la Sorgue and Abbaye de Silvacane in July.

Musiques dans les Vignes Highly atmospheric classical music concerts between vines, from mid-July to early August in Vaucluse.

National Day Fireworks, parades and all-round hoo-ha to mark the storming of the Bastille in 1789, symbol of the French Revolution, celebrated regionwide on 14 July.

Festival Choral International en Provence International polyphony festival held from the end of July to early August, organised by the region's Provençal polyphony group. Held in Var and Bouches du Rhône.

December

Christmas On 25 December, most villages celebrate Noël with midnight Mass, traditional chants in Provençal and a ceremony in which shepherds offer a new-born lamb. Séguret (p179) still celebrates Christmas with Mass and a living crèche.

FOOD & DRINK

For the full low-down on gastronomic Provence see p42.

In the Eating listings in this guide, we indicate the price of a *menu* (two- or three-course meal at a set price); ordering à la carte is generally more expensive.

Budget restaurants serve simple, generally unadventurous meals for €10 or so. Midrange places, of which there are plenty, cook up seasonal specialities accompanied by bags of atmosphere, with *menus* costing €15 to €25 (less at lunchtime). More-formal service, creative cuisine, an unusual and stylish décor, and *menus* costing anything upwards

PLAIN OLD WATER

Tap water is safe to drink, but the water spouting from fountains that tout a sign reading *eau non potable* (nondrinking water) isn't.

of €30 are distinguishing features of top-end eating spots.

Where to Eat & Drink

Dining à la provençal can mean spending anything from €10 in a village bistro to upwards of €75 at a multistarred gastronomic temple. Irrespective of price range, a *carte* (menu) is usually pinned up outside, allowing for a price and dish check.

The most authentic places to eat are invariably in tiny hamlets off the beaten track, touting just one *menu* with *vin compris* (wine included). Coffee, the usual way to end a meal, is served espresso-style – short, black and strong – unless you specify otherwise: *café crème* is an espresso with steamed milk or cream and *café au lait* is hot milk with a dash of coffee. Tea comes in the form of an empty cup and a tea bag (no milk).

Some restaurants in larger towns and with illustrious addresses regionwide get crowded, so it's best to book. Few accept reservations for more than one seating, allowing ample time to linger over coffee and *digestif* (postdinner drink). Some don't accept credit cards.

Standard opening hours for eating places are listed on the Quick Reference page on the front-cover flap of this book. Those deviating from these are listed in the regional chapters.

FERMES AUBERGES & CHATEAUX

Feasting on homemade food on a *ferme auberge* (working farm) or a wine-producing estate is a great way to dine. Typical Provençal cuisine and pace is guaranteed; portions appease the feistiest of appetites and dining is often around shared tables. A four-course *menu*, often with wine, costs €20 to €40.

Maisons des vins (wine houses) have lists of chateaux where you can eat; Gîtes de France (p400) has farm details.

CAFÉS

Cafés – the hub of village life – invariably double as bar and bistro, too. Most serve croissant-and-coffee breakfasts and lunchtime

baguettes filled with cheese (around €4) or charcuterie (cold meat). In towns, cafés on grand boulevards or in chic spots such as the Vieux Port in St-Tropez charge more than a place fronting a quiet side street. In fine café tradition Aix-en-Provence's Les Deux Garçons (p129), the region's most famous café, hikes up its prices after 10pm.

QUICK EATS

Crepe makers and ice-cream and *beignet* (doughnut) stalls are rife in seaside resorts, but in inland villages and towns people simply nip into a café for a sandwich, or a *salon de thé* (tea room) or *patisserie* for a slice of something sweet to munch sitting down or on the move.

SELF-CATERING

When shopping, do as the locals do: buy fresh local produce from the weekly market (market days are listed in regional chapters). Markets are always in the morning (around 7am to noon or 1pm) and – if it's a *marché paysan* (farmers market) or *marché bio* (organic market) – sell produce grown without the aid of pesticides, chemical fertilisers etc. Staple products include fruit and vegetables, olives, olive oil, bunches or woven plaits of *aïl* (garlic), marinated olives and dried herbs in stubby coarse sacks.

Markets aside, buying a baked-that-hour baguette or loaf of *pain aux olives* (olive bread) in the local *boulangerie* (bakery), a *tarte aux fruits* (fruit tart) in the *patisserie*, cheese in the *fromagerie* (cheese shop), the catch of the day in the *poissonnerie* (fishmongers) and cold meats, seafood salads and so on in the charcuterie can be more expensive – but is definitely more satisfying – than shopping in a supermarket.

Those needing shed-loads of beer, bottled water etc will do no better than Monoprix or one of the *hypermarchés* (Leclerc, Intermarché etc) skirting larger towns.

Vegetarians & Vegans

In a country where *viande* (meat) once meant 'food' too, it comes as no surprise that vegetarians and vegans are not catered for particularly well, if at all: vegetarian restaurants are non-existent, as are vegetarian *menus*. That said, vegetables form the backbone of many typical Provençal dishes, meaning nonmeat-eaters won't starve (even if it does mean compiling

a full meal from a selection of starters), while *produits biologiques* (organic products) are all the rage nowadays, even among carnivores.

Strict vegetarians should note that most cheeses in France are made with *lactosérum* (rennet), an enzyme derived from the stomach of a calf or young goat, and that some red wines are clarified with the albumin of egg whites. Vegetarian wine (clarified using a chemical substitute or not at all) is impossible to find in the region, but *le vin bio* (organic wine) – made from grapes grown without the aid of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and often bottled in recycled glass – is becoming increasingly popular.

Dining with Kids

Children are welcomed in eating establishments, despite the lack of facilities that suggests otherwise. Highchairs are rare and the *menu enfant* (children's menu) that ventures away from the €5 to €8 realm of *boeuf haché* (minced beef), *frites* (fries) and *glace* (ice cream) is an exception. That said, *menus* geared to smaller appetites are increasing, with several upmarket places touting *menus* in the €15 range for pint-sized gourmets. For parents with toddlers who can't sit still, less formal *fermes auberges* (opposite) are an attractive option.

Breastfeeding in public is not frowned upon. The choice of baby food, infant formulas, soy and cows' milk and the like is as great in French supermarkets as it is back home; larger pharmacies also sell these products. For grizzly babies cutting teeth, there's nothing better to shut them up than the knobby end of a baguette!

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

There are large gay and lesbian communities in Aix-en-Provence, Nice, Cannes and Marseille, the latter being host to the colourful **Gay Pride march** (www.marseillepride.org in French) in late June or early July and the week-long **Universités Euroméditerranéennes des Homosexualités** (www.france.qrd.org/assoc/ueh/), a Euro-Mediterranean gay and lesbian summer school held in July. Smaller gay groups along the Riviera join forces for the annual **Gay Pride Côte d'Azur** (www.gaypride.fr.st in French), often held in Cannes.

The lesbian scene is as public as its gay counterpart. The region's most active gay and lesbian groups are in Marseille: they include **Act Up Marseille** (☎ 04 91 34 04 14; 1 rue Roussel Doria, 4e);

lesbian group **Centre Évolutif Lilith** (CEL; ☎ 04 91 05 81 41; <http://celmrs.free.fr> in French; 17 allées Léon Gambetta); and bookshop-café **Les Mots pour le Dire** (☎ 04 91 48 79 10; www.lesmotspourledire.fr in French; 33 rue des Trois Mages), which hosts regular gay-inspired and -driven events (lectures, discussion groups, book readings etc).

Gay Provence (www.gay-provence.org) is an online gay listings guide to the region.

HOLIDAYS**French Public Holidays**

Museums and shops (but not cinemas, restaurants or bakeries) and most business shut on the following *jours fériés* (public holidays). When one falls on a Thursday, many people make a *pont* (bridge, ie with the weekend), meaning they don't work the Friday either.

New Year's Day (Jour de l'An) 1 January

Easter Sunday & Monday (Pâques & lundi de Pâques) Late March/April

May Day (Fête du Travail) 1 May

Victoire 1945 8 May – celebrates the Allied victory in Europe that ended WWII

Ascension Thursday (L'Ascension) May – celebrated on the 40th day after Easter

Pentecost/Whit Sunday & Whit Monday (Pentecôte & lundi de Pentecôte) Mid-May to mid-June – celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter

Fête Nationale (Bastille Day/National Day) 14 July

Assumption Day (L'Assomption) 15 August

All Saints' Day (La Toussaint) 1 November

Remembrance Day (L'onze Novembre) 11 November – celebrates the WWI armistice

Christmas (Noël) 25 December

Monégasque Public Holidays

Monaco shares the same holidays with France *except* those on 8 May, 14 July and 11 November. Additional public holidays:

Feast of Ste-Dévote 27 January – patron saint of Monaco

Corpus Christi June – three weeks after Ascension

Fête Nationale (National Day) 19 November

Immaculate Conception 8 December

School Holidays

Travelling to/from and around the region during French *vacances scolaires* (school holidays) is not recommended, especially in July and August when French families hit the coast for their annual summer holiday; Saturday is a horrendous day to travel.

Christmas–New Year Schools nationwide are closed 20 December to 4 January.

February–March The ‘Feb’ holidays last from about 7 February to 5 March; pupils in each of three zones are off for overlapping 15-day periods.

Easter The month-long spring break, which begins around Easter, also means pupils have overlapping 15-day holidays.

Summer The nationwide summer holiday lasts from the tail end of June until very early September.

INSURANCE

A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is recommended. Some policies exclude dangerous activities such as scuba diving, motorcycling and trekking up very high mountains.

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later ensure you keep all documentation. Check that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home. Paying for your airline ticket with a credit card often provides limited travel-accident insurance. Ask your credit-card company what it’s prepared to cover.


See p428 for health insurance and p426 for car insurance.

INTERNET ACCESS

Things are improving rapidly for wi-fi users on the coast and in more developed areas inland: wireless access points (some free, some not) can be found in all the region’s airports and many hotels, cafés and other public spaces. Check sites such as www.wifinder.com or France-specific www.journaldunet.com/wifi for access points regionwide (389 hot spots in Alpes-Maritimes, 184 in Bouches du Rhône, 135 in the Var, 52 in the Vaucluse and 19 in Alpes de Haute-Provence at the last count).

Internet cafés are fairly abundant in towns and cities; they are listed under Information in the regional chapters. You’ll pay €3 to €5 per hour. In museums, tourist offices and other

WHAT THE COMPUTER ICON MEANS

Throughout this guide, only hotels and other types of accommodation that have an actual computer that guests can physically use to access the internet are flagged with a computer icon like this: ; those that are wi-fi friendly, but have no computer, are not.

public buildings, you may come across phone-card-operated **Borne internet terminals** (www.netanoo.com in French); a 120-unit France Télécom *télécarte* (€15) gets you two hours online.

Some post offices are equipped with Cyberposte, a card-operated internet terminal for public use. Access cards cost €7.60 for the first hour and €4.60 for a one-hour recharge. Find a list of Cyberposte-equipped post offices at www.cyberposte.com (in French).

On newer SNCF trains an ‘office space’ next to the luggage compartments between carriages is provided for passengers; it comes complete with desk and plug to hook your laptop into the electricity supply.

If you’re using your laptop, check that it is compatible with the 220V current in France; if not, you will need a converter. You’ll also need a telephone plug adaptor. Having a reputable global modem will prevent access problems that can occur with PC-card modems brought from home.

If you do not choose a global Internet Service Provider (ISP; such as AOL), make sure your ISP has a dial-up number in France. Local ISPs **Free** (www.free.com), **Tiscali** (www.tiscali.fr) and **Orange** (www.orange.fr in French) have cheap or free short-term membership (look out for free trial membership CD-ROMs).

For useful travel websites, see p22.

LEGAL MATTERS

Police

French police have wide powers of search and seizure, and can ask you to prove your identity at any time. Foreigners must be able to prove their legal status in France (eg passport, visa, residency permit) without delay.

Verbally (and of course physically) abusing a police officer can carry a hefty fine, even imprisonment. You can refuse to sign a police statement, and you have the right to ask for a copy.

People who are arrested are considered innocent until proven guilty, but can be held in custody until trial. The website www.service-public.fr has information about legal rights.

French police are ultrastrict about security. Do not leave baggage unattended at airports or train stations: suspicious objects will be summarily blown up.

Drugs & Alcohol

Contrary to popular belief, French law does not officially distinguish between ‘hard’ and

‘soft’ drugs. The penalty for any personal use of *stupéfiants* (including cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy and heroine) can be a one-year jail sentence and a €3750 fine. Importing, possessing, selling or buying drugs can get you up to 10 years in prison and a fine of €7,500,000. Being drunk in public places is theoretically punishable with a €150 fine.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Provence–Alpes–Côte d’Azur is one of 22 French *régions* (administrative regions). It has an elected *conseil régional* (regional council) based in Marseille.

The *région* is split into six *départements* (departments). This book covers five of them: Alpes de Haute-Provence (04), Alpes-Maritimes (06), Bouches du Rhône (13), Var (83) and Vaucluse (84). Nîmes, on the western bank of the River Rhône, falls into the Gard *département* in the neighbouring Languedoc-Roussillon *région*. *Départements* are known by a two-digit code (listed above), included in postcodes.

France has 96 *départements* (including Corsica). Each *département* has a *préfet* (prefect)

LEGAL AGES

- Age considered minor under anti-child-pornography & child-prostitution laws: 18
- Age of consent: 15
- Age of majority: 18
- Buying alcohol: 16
- Driving: 18
- Voting: 18

based in a *préfecture* (prefecture), who represents the national government, and an elected *conseil général* (general council). There’s a *préfecture* in Digne-les-Bains (04), Nice (06), Marseille (13), Toulon (83) and Avignon (84).

MAPS

Quality regional maps are widely available outside France. **Michelin** (www.viamichelin.com) and **IGN** (www.ign.fr in French) both have online boutiques where you can purchase maps. Michelin’s yellow-jacketed map *Provence and the*



Côte d'Azur No 245 covers the area included in this guide at a scale of 1:200,000.

Within the region you can find city maps at *maisons de la presse* (newsagencies) in most towns and cities, at *papeteries* (stationery shops), tourist offices, travel bookshops, and also at many of the mainstream bookshops. Kümmerly & Frey, with its orange-jacketed *Blay-Foldex Plans-Guides* series, and Éditions Grafocarte, with its blue-jacketed *Plan Guide Bleu & Orange*, are the main city-map publishers. A city map typically costs around €4. The free street *plans* (maps) distributed by tourist offices range from the superb to the useless.

For walking and cycling maps see p88 and p81.

MONEY

The euro (€) – Europe's common currency in circulation in 12 Euroland countries since 1 January 2002 – is the only legal tender in France and Monaco.

One euro is divided into 100 cents, also called centimes in France. Coins come in one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 cents and €1 and €2 denominations; the latter has a brass centre and silvery edges and the €1 has the reverse (silvery centre, brass edges). Euro banknotes, adorned with fictitious bridges (which bear a striking resemblance to the Pont du Gard) are issued in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and the often-unwelcome €500.

Exchange rates are given on the inside front-cover flap of this book. For information on costs see p20.

ATMs

ATMs – *distributeurs automatiques de billets* or *points d'argent* – invariably provide the easiest means of getting cash. Most spit out euro banknotes at a superior exchange rate through Visa or MasterCard, and there are plenty of ATMs in the region linked to the international Cirrus and Maestro networks. If you remember your PIN code as a string of letters, translate it into numbers; French keypads don't show letters.

Credit Cards

This is the cheapest way to pay for things and to get cash advances. Visa (Carte Bleue in France) is the most widely accepted, followed by MasterCard (Access or Eurocard). Amex cards are not very useful except at up-market establishments, but they do allow you

to get cash at certain ATMs and at Amex offices. Travelling with two different credit cards (stashed in different wallets) is safer than taking one.

To report a lost or stolen credit card:

Amex (☎ 01 47 77 72 00)

Diners Club (☎ 08 10 31 41 59)

MasterCard, Eurocard & Access (Eurocard France; ☎ 08 00 90 13 87)

Visa (Carte Bleue; ☎ 08 00 90 20 33)

Tippling

French law requires that restaurant, café and hotel bills include a service charge (usually 10% to 15%), so a tip is neither necessary nor expected. However, most people – except in cases of dire service – do usually leave a euro or two in restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Most banks cash travellers cheques issued by Amex (in US dollars or euros) and by Visa (in euros) for a charge of around €5 per transaction or a percentage fee.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Photo development in France is of excellent quality but expensive compared with many other countries. Expect to pay around €0.25/0.20 per print for up to 50/100 *tirages numériques* (digital prints). Transferring your images onto a CD usually costs an additional €5, although some photo shops throw a CD in for free.

Colour-print film remains widely available but, again, costly, so stock up ahead of time. For *diapositives* (slides), avoid Kodachrome: it's difficult to process quickly in France and may not be handled correctly. You can easily obtain video cartridges in large towns, but it's good to come with a few from home.

A good companion when on the road is *Travel Photography: A Guide to Taking Better Pictures*, by travel photographer Richard I'Anson.

POST

Postal services are fast (next-day delivery for most domestic letters), reliable and expensive. Post offices are signposted **La Poste** (www.laposte.fr in French). For a pretty postage stamp (*un timbre*) rather than the uninspiring blue sticker (*une vignette*) that comes out of post office coin-operated machines, go to a window marked *toutes opérations* (all services).

Tobacconists and shops selling postcards sell stamps, too. French stamps can be used in Monaco, but Monégasque stamps are only valid in Monaco.

From France and Monaco, domestic letters up to 20g cost €0.53. For international post, there are three zones: a postcard or letter/package under 20g/2kg costs €0.55/12.50 to Zone A (EU, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway); €0.75/14 to Zone B (the rest of Europe and Africa); and €0.90/20.50 to Zone C (North and South America, Asia, Middle East, Australasia).

SHOPPING

For olive oil-shopping tips and tricks see p45.

Many edible products that come from Provence – *marrons au sirop* (chestnuts in syrup) from the Massif des Maures, *calissons* (marzipan-like sweets frosted with icing sugar) from Aix-en-Provence and rice from the Camargue – are easy to transport home. But most glass-jar products sold at markets are homemade and rarely contain preservatives. Lavender marmalade from Carpentras market, for example, lasts one month – stored in the fridge – after being opened, while onion chutney from the Luberon – mind-blowingly delicious as it is – won't even survive outside a fridge. The same goes for bread, cheese and fresh truffles. But not for wine.

Less-tasty treats worth a shopping spree include perfumes from Grasse; leather sandals from St-Tropez; colourful wicker baskets and carnations from Antibes; glassware from Biot; Picasso-inspired ceramics from Vallauris; faïence from Moustiers-Ste-Marie; pipes and carpets from Cogolin; soap and *santons* ('little saints'; p100) from Marseille or Salon de Provence; *courgourdons* (traditional ornaments made from dyed and hollowed marrows or squash) from Nice; lavender oil, pottery, sundials and wrought-iron pieces from the Luberon; colourful Provençal fabrics from practically anywhere in the region; antiques from L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue; terracotta and ceramic tiles from Salernes; gallery art from St-Paul de Vence and Mougins, and the latest haute-couture designs from Monaco.

Bargaining

Market shopping is one of the region's greatest joys; market days are listed in each regional chapter. Little bargaining goes on, although it's always worth a try.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Male or female, travelling solo in the region poses few problems bar the fact that a sizable chunk of hotels don't have single rooms, or charge the same price for a so-called 'single' as a double. Dining alone in restaurants or sipping coffee in cafés is quite common, although lone women might well attract unwanted attention in busier spots on the coast.

TELEPHONE

France and Monaco have separate telephone systems.

French telephone numbers have 10 digits and need no area code; those starting with the digits 06 are mobile-phone numbers. To call anywhere in Provence and the Côte d'Azur from Monaco and abroad, dial your country's international access code, followed by 33 (France's country code) and the 10-digit number, dropping the initial 0. To call abroad from Provence, dial 00 (France's international access code), followed by the country code, area code (dropping the initial 0 if necessary) and local number.

Telephone numbers in Monaco have eight digits and likewise need no area code. To call Monaco from France and abroad, dial the international access code, followed by 377 (Monaco's country code) and the eight-digit number. To call abroad (including France) from Monaco, dial 00, followed by the country code, area code (dropping the initial zero if necessary) and local number.

Mobile Phones

France uses GSM 900/1800, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australia but

PHONE BOOK

Not sure which number to call? Find the full list of 'help' telephone numbers at ☎ 118 (www.appel118.fr in French):

Directory Inquiries (☎ 118 012; www.118012.fr in French)

France Télécom Customer Service (☎ 08 00 36 47 75, in English)

International Directory Inquiries (☎ 3212; €3 to find two numbers)

International reverse-charge (collect) call (☎ 00-33 plus relevant country code – 11 instead of 1 for the USA and Canada – and telephone number)

not with the North American GSM 1900 or the totally different system in Japan (though some North Americans have GSM 1900/900 phones that do work here). If you have a GSM phone, check with your service provider about using it in France, and beware of calls being routed internationally (very expensive for a 'local' call).

The three major providers of mobile phone access are **SFR** (☎ 08 00 10 60 00; www.sfr.com), **Bouygues** (☎ 08 10 63 01 00; www.bouygtel.com) and France Telecom's **Orange** (☎ 0 800 830 800; www.orange.fr). If you already have a compatible phone, you can buy a 'prepay' phone kit, which gives you a SIM-card with a mobile-phone number and a set number of calls. When these run out you purchase a recharge card at most *tabacs* (tobacconists). You can also get similar 'prepay' deals that include the phone itself.

Card packages, sold at phone shops and branches of FNAC in Avignon, Nice, Nîmes and Marseille, enable you to have your own French mobile-telephone number and make and receive calls at local rates.

Mobile-phone numbers in France always begin with 06. France has a 'caller pays' system, which means that you do not pay to receive a call on your mobile phone unless it is an international call.

Public Phones & Telephone Cards

Public telephones in France are card operated. Most have a button displaying two flags that you push for explanations in English.

Télécartes (phonecards) cost €8 or €15 at post offices, *tabacs* and anywhere that you see a blue sticker reading '*télécarte en vente ici*'. There are two kinds of phonecards, *cartes à puce* (cards with a magnetic chip, that are inserted chip-first into public phones) and *cartes à code* (that you can use from public or private phones by dialling the free access number and then punching in the card's scratch-off code).

Your choice of card will depend on your needs. France Télécom offers different cards suited to national and international dialling. For help in English on all France Télécom's services, see www.francetelecom.com or call ☎ 08 00 36 47 75.

A whole bevy of other cards is available for cheap international calls and most can be used elsewhere in Europe. Compare advertised rates, or ask which one is best for the place you're calling.

TIME

French and Monégasque time is GMT/UTC plus one hour, except during daylight-saving time (from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October) when it is GMT/UTC plus two hours. The UK and France are always one hour apart: when it's 6pm in London, it's 7pm in Nice. New York is six hours behind Nice.

France uses the 24-hour clock and writes time like this: 15h30 (ie 3.30pm). Time has no meaning for many people in Provence.

TOILETS

Public toilets, signposted *toilettes* or WC, are surprisingly few and far between, which means you can be left feeling really rather desperate. Towns that have public toilets generally tout them near the *mairie* (town hall) or in the port area. Many have coin-operated, self-flushing toilet booths – highly disconcerting should the automatic mechanism fail with you inside. These toilets can usually be found in car parks and public squares; they cost €0.20 to enter. Some places sport flushless, kerbside *urinoirs* (urinals) reeking with generations of urine.

Restaurants, cafés and bars are often woeefully under equipped with such amenities, so start queuing ahead of time. Bashful males be warned: some toilets are almost unisex; the urinals and washbasins are in a common area through which all and sundry pass to get to the toilet stalls. Older establishments often sport Turkish-style *toilettes à la turque*, a squat toilet with a high-pressure flushing mechanism that can soak your feet if you don't step back in time.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Local Tourist Offices

Every city and town and many villages have an *office du tourisme* (tourist office run by some unit of local government) or *syndicat d'initiative* (tourist office run by an organisation of local merchants). Both are excellent resources and can always provide a local map and information on accommodation.

Regional tourist information is handled by five *comités départementaux du tourisme* (departmental tourist offices), whose websites are invaluable information sources:

Alpes de Haute-Provence (☎ 04 92 31 57 29; www.alpes-haute-provence.com; Maison des Alpes de Haute-Provence, Immeuble François Mitterand, BP 170, F-04005 Digne-les-Bains)

Alpes-Maritimes (Map pp262-3; ☎ 04 93 21 80 95; www.guidedriviera.com; 55 promenade des Anglais, F-06011 Nice)

Bouches du Rhône (Map p98; ☎ 04 91 13 84 13; www.visitprovence.com; 13 rue Roux de Brignoles, F-13006 Marseille)

Var (☎ 04 94 50 55 50; www.tourismevar.com in French; 1 blvd Maréchal Foch, BP 99, F-83003 Draguignan)

Vauduse (Map p160; ☎ 04 90 80 47 00; www.provenceguide.com; 12 rue Collège de la Croix, BP 147, F-84008 Avignon)

For tourist information on the principality of Monaco, contact its national tourist office in Monte Carlo (see p386).

French Tourist Offices Abroad

There are a number of French tourist offices abroad (www.franceguide.com), called *maisons de la France*:

Australia (☎ 02-9231 5244; info.au@franceguide.com; Level 13, 25 Bligh St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Belgium (☎ 09-028 8025; info.be@franceguide.com; av de la Toison d'Or 21, 1050 Brussels)

Canada (☎ 514-288 2026; canada@franceguide.com; 1981 McGill College Av, Suite 490, Montreal, Que H3A 2W9)

Germany (☎ 09001 57 00 25; info.de@franceguide.com; Zeppelinallee 37, 60325 Frankfurt)

Ireland (☎ 01560 235 235; info.ie@franceguide.com; 10 Suffolk St, Dublin 2)

Italy (☎ 899 199 072; info.it@franceguide.com; Via Larga 7, 20122 Milan)

Netherlands (☎ 0900 11 22 332; info.nl@franceguide.com; Prinsengracht 670, 1017 KX Amsterdam)

Spain Madrid (☎ 807 117 181; info.es@franceguide.com; Plaza de España 18, 28008 Madrid); Barcelona (☎ 807 117 181; Fontanella 21-23, 08010 Barcelona)

Switzerland Zurich (☎ 01-211 3085; info.ch@franceguide.com; Rennweg 42, 8023 Zurich); Geneva

(☎ 0900 900 699; c/o SNCF-Rail Europe, 2 rue de Lausanne 11, 1201 Geneva)

UK (☎ 09068 244 123; info.uk@franceguide.com; 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 9AL)

USA New York (☎ 514-288 1904; info.us@franceguide.com; 444 Madison Av, 10022 New York); Los Angeles

(☎ 310-271 6665; info.losangeles@franceguide.com; 9454 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 715, Beverly Hills, CA 90212-2967)

Monégasque Tourist Offices Abroad

Monaco has its own string of tourist offices (www.monaco-tourisme.com):

France (☎ 01 42 96 12 23; dtcparis@gouv.mc; 73 av des Champs Elysées, F-75008 Paris)

Germany (☎ 211-323 78 43; monaco_informations_centrum@gouv.mc; WZ Center, Königsallee 27-31, D-40212 Düsseldorf)

Italy (☎ 02 8645 8480; principatodimonoaco.milano@gouv.mc; Via Dante 12, I-20121 Milan)

UK (☎ 020-7352 9962; dtc.london@gouv.mc; 206 Harbour Yard, Chelsea Harbour, London SW10 0XD)

USA (☎ 212-286 3330; info@visitmonaco.com; 565 Fifth Ave, 23rd fl, New York NY 10017)

TOURS

Dozens of enticing half- and full-day tours available through tourist offices are peppered throughout the regional chapters of this guide.

Most organised tours are activity-driven, focusing on the great outdoors (see p87). But there are lovely ones focusing on art, craft, food and wine, too:

Arblaster & Clarke (☎ 01730-893344; www.arblasterandclarke.com; Farnham Rd, West Liss, Hants GU33 6JQ, UK) Food and wine tour specialists offering different tours each year, often including a four-night 'Gourmet Provence' tour, with four-star chateau accommodation, a couple of meals in two-star Michelin restaurants, cookery demonstrations etc; wine tours, too.

La Provence Verte (☎ 04 94 72 04 21; www.la-provence-verte.net; Maison du Tourisme, Carrefour de l'Europe, F-83170 Brignoles) Gastronomy and food 'weekends' (three-night truffle weekends from €259); 'patrimony' sightseeing trips and plenty of outdoor thrills and spills.

Martin Randall Travel (☎ 020-8742 3355; www.martinrandall.com; 10 Barley Mow Passage, London W4 4PH, UK) A fabulous wealth of art and architecture tours led by art historians or experts in their fields. Themes include 'Art on the Côte d'Azur' (seven days, UK £1370) and 'Gardens of the Riviera' (six days, UK £1370).

Service Loisirs Accueil Bouches du Rhône (☎ 04 90 59 49 36; www.visitprovence.com; 13 rue Roux de Brignoles, F-13006 Marseille) A wide range of imaginative two- to seven-day packages offered by the Bouches du Rhône tourist board: impressionist-painting courses, chocolate courses, 'discovering Provence', 'pottery in Aubagne' workshops and mountains of outdoor activity-driven ideas.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

The region is gradually becoming more user-friendly for *handicapés* (people with disabilities), but kerb ramps remain rare, older public facilities and budget hotels lack lifts, and the cobblestone streets typical of hilltop villages are a nightmare to navigate in a *fauteuil roulant* (wheelchair).

But all is not lost. Many two- or three-star hotels are equipped with lifts. On the coast there are beaches – flagged *handiplages* on city maps – with wheelchair access in

Cannes, Marseille, Nice, Hyères, Ste-Maxime and Monaco.

Michelin's *Guide Rouge* indicates those hotels with lifts and facilities for people with disabilities, while Gîtes de France (p400) provides a list of *gîtes ruraux* and *chambres d'hôtes* with wheelchair access.

International airports offer assistance to travellers with disabilities. TGV and regular trains are also accessible for passengers in wheelchairs; call the **SNCF Accessibilité Service** (☎ 08 00 15 47 53) for information. Its brochure (with one page in English), *Le Mémento du Voyageur à Mobilité Réduite*, is a useful guide.

Specialised travel agencies abroad include US-based **Wheels Up!** (☎ 1-888 38 4335; www.wheelsup.com) and UK-based **Access Travel** (☎ 01942 888 844; www.access-travel.co.uk).

VISAS

Up-to-date visa regulations are posted on the Foreign Affairs Ministry website at www.diplomatie.gouv.fr.

EU nationals and citizens of Switzerland, Iceland and Norway only need a passport or national identity card to enter, and stay in, France.

As tourists, citizens of Australia, the US, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and Israel don't need a visa for stays of up to three months.

As a practical matter, if you don't need a visa to visit France, no-one is likely to kick you out after three months. The unspoken policy seems to be that you can stay and spend your money in France as long as you don't try to work, apply for social services or commit a crime. Staying longer than three months is nonetheless illegal, and without a *carte de séjour* (residence permit) you can face real problems renting an apartment, opening a bank account and so on.

Tourist Visa

Those travellers not exempt need a tourist visa, also known as a **Schengen visa** (www.eurovisa.com) after the Schengen agreement that abolished passport controls between Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. A Schengen visa allows unlimited travel throughout this zone for 90 days.

Applications are made with the consulate of the country you are entering first, or of the country that will be your main destination.

Among other things, you will need medical insurance and proof of sufficient funds to support yourself.

If you enter France overland, it is unlikely that your visa will be checked at the border, but major problems can arise later on if you don't have one.

Tourist visas *cannot* be extended except in emergencies (such as medical problems); you'll need to leave and reapply from outside France when your visa expires.

Long-Stay & Student Visa

This is the first step if you want to work or study in France, or stay for more than three months. Long-stay and student visas will allow you to enter France and apply for a *carte de séjour*. Contact the French embassy or consulate nearest your residence, and begin your application well in advance as it can take months. Tourist visas cannot be changed into student visas after arrival. However, short-term visas are available for students sitting university-entry exams in France.

Working-Holiday Visa

Citizens of Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand aged between 18 and 29 years (inclusive) are eligible for a one-year, multiple-entry working-holiday visa, allowing you to travel around France and work at the same time.

You have to apply to the embassy or consulate in your home country, and you must have a return ticket home, insurance and sufficient money to fund the start of your stay. Apply early as quotas do apply.

Once you have found a job in France, you have to apply for an *autorisation provisoire de travail* (temporary work permit), valid for the duration of the employment position offered. The permit can be renewed under the same conditions up to the limit of the authorised length of stay.

Carte de Séjour

Once issued with a long-stay visa, you can apply for a *carte de séjour*, and are usually required to do so within eight days of arrival in France. Make sure you have all the necessary documents *before* you arrive.

EU passport-holders and citizens of Switzerland, Iceland and Norway no longer need a *carte de séjour* to reside (or work) in France. Other foreign nationals must contact the local *préfecture* or *commissariat* (police station) for

their permit. Students of all nationalities need a *carte de séjour*.

VOLUNTEERING

Get stuck into an environment-driven volunteering project in the region:

Alpes de Lumière (☎ 04 92 75 22 01; <http://alpes-de-lumiere.org>; 1 place du Palais, Forcalquier) Brings together 20-odd volunteers in summer to help restore and conserve Haute-Provence's rural heritage; work in the morning, play in the afternoons.

APARE (☎ 04 90 85 51 15; www.apare-gec.org; 25 blvd Paul Pons, Isle-sur-la Sorgue) Volunteer heritage work camps for 16- to 18-year-olds/adults, including 25/35 hours' work a week. Its 2006 list of 23 camps included restoring St-Tropez's citadel walls, a wash house in Vachères or an old dry-stone walled farm near Mont Ventoux; and consolidating the banks of the River Sorgue in Isle-sur-la-Sorgue. Two-/three-week camps command a €95/130 contribution per adult volunteer to cover food and lodging, and €305 for three-week teen camps.

Conservatoire du Patrimoine et du Traditions du Freinet (☎ 04 94 43 08 57; www.conservatoiredufreinet.org; Chapelle St-Jean, place de la Mairie, La Garde Freinet) Clear forest areas and shrubland, rebuild dry-stone walls and help out on other *chantiers du patrimoine* (heritage sites) in the Massif des Maures.

Conservatoire Études des Écosystèmes de Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (CEEP; ☎ 04 42 20 03 83; www.ccep.asso.fr in French; 890 chemin de Bouenhour haut, Aix-en-Provence) Voluntary *chantiers verts* (green workshops) aimed at discovering nature's ecosystems.

La Sabranenque (www.sabranenque.com) Help restore a Provençal hilltop village between Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Orange; see p172 for details.

Rempart (☎ 01 42 71 96 55; www.rempart.org; 1 rue des Guillemites, Paris) Two- and three-week heritage *chantiers* on endangered sites in France, including several in Provence; volunteers pay €5 to €8 per day, plus €40 insurance and membership.

Village des Tortues (☎ 04 94 78 26 41; www.village-tortues.com in French; adult/5-16yr €9/6; ☎ 9am-7pm Mar-Nov) This tortoise village in the Massif des Maures offers a limited number of placements to students aged 17 and over. The centre allows its students to spend 15 days to a month working at the village, March to November. Free board and lodging is included. See p362 for more.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

French men have clearly given little thought to the concept of *harcèlement sexuel* (sexual harassment). Most still believe that staring suavely at a passing woman is paying her a compliment. Women need not walk around the region in fear, however. Suave stares are

about as adventurous as most French men get, with women rarely being physically assaulted on the street or touched up in bars at night.

Unfortunately, it's not French men that women travellers have to concern themselves with. While women attract little unwanted attention in rural Provence, on the coast it's a different ball game. In the dizzying heat of high season, the Côte d'Azur is rampant with men and women of *all* nationalities out on the pull. Apply the usual 'women traveller' rules and the chances are you'll emerge from the circus unscathed. Remain conscious of your surroundings, avoid going to bars and clubs alone at night and be aware of potentially dangerous situations: deserted streets, lonely beaches, dark corners of large train stations, and on night buses in certain districts of Marseille and Nice.

Topless sunbathing – ironically less and less the fashion on Côte d'Azur beaches where it is very much tops on these days – is not generally interpreted as deliberately provocative.

SOS Viol is a voluntary women's group that staffs the national **rape-crisis hotline** (☎ 08 00 05 95 95). Its centre in Marseille is spearheaded by **SOS Femmes** (Map p98; ☎ 04 91 24 61 50; www.sosfemmes.com in French; 14 blvd Théodore Thumer) and in Nice by **Femmes Battues** (☎ 04 93 52 17 81; <http://accueillefemmesbattues.chez-alice.fr>; 81 rue de France, bureau 312).

WORK

EU nationals have an automatic right to work in France. Non-EU citizens need to apply for a work permit, for which they first need a *carte de séjour* or working-holiday visa (see opposite), as well as a written promise of employment. Permits can be refused on the grounds of high local unemployment. That said, work 'in the black' (ie without documents) is possible in the Côte d'Azur's tourist industry and during Provence's grape harvest.

France's national employment service, the **Agence National pour l'Emploi** (ANPE; www.anpe.fr in French), advertises jobs in the region on its website, as does local recruitment agency **Le Cyber Emploi** (☎ 04 97 13 42 80; www.cbyer-emploi.org; place Yves Klein, F-06300 Nice). For those seeking casual, student-style summer work, **La Maison des Étudiants de Nice** (www.campus.nice.fr in French) in Nice is a handy one-stop shop.

Agricultural Work

To pick up a job in a field, ask around in areas where harvesting is taking place; Provence

sees a succession of apple, strawberry, cherry, peach, pear and pumpkin harvests from mid-May to September.

The annual grape harvest happens from about mid-September to mid- or late October. The sun-soaked fruits of the Côtes de Provence vineyards are ready for harvest before those of the more northern Châteauneuf du Pape vineyards. Harvesting is increasingly being done by machine, although mechanical picking is forbidden in some places (such as Châteauneuf du Pape). Once the harvest starts, it lasts just a couple of weeks. The start date is announced up to one week in advance.

Food for *vendangeurs* (grape pickers) is usually supplied but accommodation is often not (which is why most pickers live locally). Tourist offices in the region have a list of local producers who might need an extra pair of hands, as do the different *maisons des vins*.

Au Pair

Under the au pair system, single young people (aged 18 to about 27) who are studying in France live with a French family and receive lodging, full board and a bit of pocket money in exchange for taking care of the kids, baby-sitting, doing light housework and perhaps teaching English to the children.

Many families want au pairs who are native English speakers, but knowing at least some French may be a prerequisite. **Alliance Française Marseille** (☎ 04 96 10 24 60; www.alliancefrmarseille.org; 310 rue Paradis, F-13008 Marseille) places au pairs with families in Marseille, and **Association Familles et Jeunesse** (☎ 04 93 82 28 22; www.afj-aupair.org/apfrance.htm; 4 rue Masséna, F-06000 Nice) is one of dozens of au pair agencies on the Côte d'Azur that arrange placements.

Online, there's an agency directory at www.europa-pages.com/au_pair.

Beach Hawkers & Street Performers

Selling goods and services on the beach is one way to make a few euros, though you've got to sell an awful lot of *beignets* or wrap a lot of hair with coloured beads to make a living.

One good place street musicians, actors and jugglers might try to busk is in Avignon during its July theatre festival.

Crewing on a Yacht

Working on a yacht looks glamorous but the reality is far from cushy. Cannes, Antibes or any other yacht-filled port on the Côte d'Azur are the places to look for work. Antibes, in particular, has a clutch of crew recruitment agencies, including **International Crew Recruitment** (☎ 04 93 34 27 71; 16b av du 24 Août); **YPI Crew** (☎ 04 92 90 46 10; www.ypicrew.com; Les Résidences du Port Vauban, 17 av du 11 Novembre) and **AMPM Crew Solutions** (☎ 04 94 34 06 14; www.ampmcrew.com; 28 av Thiers), which run training courses (safety, yacht management etc) as well as placing crew.

Yacht owners often take on newcomers for a trial period of day-crewing before hiring them for the full charter season, which lasts from March to September on the Mediterranean. By late September long-haul crews are in demand for winter voyages to warmer Caribbean climes.

Ski Resorts

The region's ski resorts – Isola 2000, Pra-Loup and La Foux d'Allos among them – are small and offer few work opportunities. If you contact the ski resort months in advance you might be able to pick up some hospitality work in a hotel or restaurant.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

See also p413 and p87 for information on tours to Provence and the Côte d'Azur.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

European integration means you'll usually cross fluidly between France and other EU countries without passing through customs or border checkpoints. If you're arriving from a non-EU country, you'll have to show your passport (and your visa permit if you need one; see p414) or your identity card if you're an EU citizen, and clear customs.

AIR

International airport departure taxes are included in the price of your ticket.

Airports

A popular tourist destination, Provence has two major airports: Marseille and Nice (although most long-haul destinations still require you to change planes in Paris, London or some other European capital). Avignon, Cannes and St-Tropez-La Môle are very small; the latter two are primarily used by private charter flights. For details on travelling between airports and city centres, see the Getting Around sections in the relevant chapters.

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Avignon (code AVN; www.avignon.aeroport.fr/fr in French)

Cannes (code CEQ; www.cannes.aeroport.fr)

Marseille-Provence (code MRS; www.marseille.aeroport.fr)

Nice-Côte d'Azur (code NCE; www.nice.aeroport.fr)

Nîmes-Garons (code FNI; www.nimes.cci.fr in French)

St-Tropez-La Môle (code LT; www.st-tropez-airport.com in French)

Toulon-Hyères (code TLN; aeroport.var.cci.fr)

Airlines

The following airlines fly to and from Provence and the Côte d'Azur:

Air Algérie (code AH; in Marseille ☎ 04 95 09 31 10, in Nice ☎ 04 93 21 48 20; www.airalgerie.dz; hub Algiers)

Air France (code AF; ☎ 08 20 82 08 20; www.airfrance.com; hub Paris)

Alitalia (code AZ; ☎ 08 20 31 53 15; www.alitalia.it; hub Rome)

bmibaby (code CWW; ☎ 08 90 71 00 81; www.bmibaby.com; hub East Midlands)

British Airways (code BA; ☎ 08 25 82 54 00; www.britishairways.com; hub Heathrow)

Corse Méditerranée (code CCM; ☎ 08 20 82 08 20; www.ccm-airlines.com; hub Paris)

easyJet (code U2; ☎ 08 26 10 26 11; www.easyjet.com; hub London Luton)

Fly Baboo (code BBO; within Europe ☎ 00800 445 445 45, in Switzerland ☎ 0848 445 445; www.flybaboo.com; hub Geneva)

Flybe (code BE; within UK ☎ 0871 700 0535, from outside UK ☎ 4413 922 685 29; www.flybe.com; hub Southampton)

Royal Air Maroc (code AT; in Nice ☎ 04 93 21 40 18; www.royalairmaroc.com; hub Casablanca)

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by www.climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Ryanair (code FR; ☎ 08 92 23 23 75; www.ryanair.com; hub Dublin)

Tunis Air (code TU; ☎ 08 20 04 40 44; www.tunisair.com.tn in French; hub Tunis)

VirginExpress (code TV; ☎ 08 21 23 02 02; www.virgin-express.com; hub Brussels)

Tickets

Air travel is a competitive business, and fares fluctuate wildly according to time of year and general availability: shop around!

The internet makes researching air fares easy. Most airlines have websites listing special offers, and there are some good online ticket agencies that will compare prices for you (eg www.travelocity.co.uk and www.deckchair.com). However, using face-to-face methods like travel agencies can furnish details that are not available on the internet, such as which airlines have the best facilities for children or which travel insurance is most suitable.

Look out for cheap 'no-frills' flights serving Avignon, Marseille, Nice, Nîmes and Toulon.

Africa

Marseille is a hub for flights to and from North Africa.

Air Algérie flies to Algeria. From Marseille there are up to two daily to Algiers and Con-

stantine, five per week to Annaba, up to 14 weekly to Oran, and flights at least weekly to Batna and Bejaia. From Nice there are weekly flights to Algiers, Constantine and Oran.

Royal Air Maroc and Air France code-share on flights to and from Morocco. From Marseille there are twice-daily flights to Casablanca and direct flights to Oudja nearly daily. There are daily flights most of the time to Casablanca from Nice.

Tunis Air flies to and from Tunis (up to four times daily) and Monastir (up to four flights weekly) from both Nice and Marseille. Air France also flies to both cities.

Australia & New Zealand

Airlines such as Thai Airways International, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas Airways and Singapore Airlines have frequent promotional fares. High-season full-price return fares to Paris cost around A\$3000 from Melbourne or Sydney, and around NZ\$3500 from Auckland. The following are major agencies for cheap fares:

Flight Centre Australia (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au); New Zealand (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz)

STA Travel Australia (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au); New Zealand (☎ 0508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz)

Continental Europe

There are flights two or three times daily between Nice/Marseille and most other European cities. They are cheapest in early spring and late autumn.

There is also a handful of interesting no-frills routes: easyJet offers year-round daily flights between Geneva, Berlin and Nice. Swiss carrier Fly Baboo flies into Nice and St-Tropez. Fares vary enormously depending on travel dates and special offers (from €40 to €180 at the time of research).

VirginExpress flies between Brussels and Nice/Marseille up to four times daily, from where onward connections abound. Again, prices vary hugely.

Across Continental Europe there are many agencies with ties to **STA Travel** (www.statravel.com) from which you can purchase cheap tickets.

UK & Ireland

No-frills airlines have slashed fares between the UK and southern France. Internet bookings are the norm; telephone bookings cost marginally more. Tickets are nonrefundable, but can be changed for a fee.

easyJet flies to/from Nice and Belfast, Bristol, Liverpool, London Gatwick, London Stansted, London Luton and Newcastle, and to/from Marseille and Bristol, Liverpool and London Gatwick. One-way fares cost anything between UK£20 and UK£155 including airport taxes.

There are bimibaby flights between Nice and Birmingham and London (around UK£60).

Flybe flies three times per week to/from Southampton and Avignon between late May and late October. Flights range from around UK£42 to UK£152.

Dublin-based Ryanair operates low-fare flights between Nîmes-Garons airport and London Luton, as well as between Nîmes and Nottingham East Midlands airport and Liverpool. Ryanair also flies between Marseille and more than a dozen UK, Continental Europe and North African destinations. Flights cost from as little as €10 plus taxes and a checked baggage allowance.

Both Nice and Marseille are served by daily British Airways and Air France flights from London (Gatwick or Heathrow).

Discount air travel is big business in London. Travel-agency ads appear in the travel pages of the weekend broadsheet newspapers, in *Time Out* and in the *Evening Standard*.

Some recommended travel agencies and online ticket sites:

Cheap Flights (www.cheapflights.co.uk)

ebookers (☎ 0800 082 3000; www.ebookers.com)

skyscanner (www.skyscanner.net) Offers comparisons between different airlines.

STA Travel (☎ 0870 163 0026; www.statravel.co.uk)

Particularly good for travellers under the age of 26.

USA & Canada

Most journeys to Provence from the North American continent entail a change in Paris, London or another European transport hub. A New York–Paris round trip can cost anything from US\$400/1000 in the low/high season with Air France or British Airways.

Discount travel agencies are known as consolidators in the USA; track them down through the *Yellow Pages* or the major daily newspapers.

Travel agencies recommended for online bookings:

Expedia (☎ 1 800 397 3342; www.expedia.com)

STA Travel (☎ 1 800 781 4040; www.sta.com)

Travelocity (☎ 1 888 709 5983; www.travelocity.com)

Airlines flying from Canada to France include British Airways, Air France and Air Canada. Flights leave from all major cities including Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. A Toronto–Paris round trip costs around C\$1400 in the high season. Travel agencies specialising in cheap fares include **Flight Centre** (☎ 1877 967 5302; www.flightcentre.com) and **Travel CUTS** (☎ 1 888 359 2887; www.travelcuts.com). **Transat** (www.transat.com) offers travel services and operates low-cost flights between Canada and Europe. **Zoom Airlines** (www.flyzoom.com) is a popular Canadian budget airline serving France.

For online bookings try www.expedia.ca and www.travelocity.ca.

LAND Continental Europe BUS

Eurolines (☎ 08 92 89 90 91; www.eurolines.com) is an association of companies forming Europe's largest international bus network. It links Provençal cities such as Nice, Marseille and Avignon with points all over Western and central Europe, Scandinavia and Morocco. Most buses operate daily in summer and several times a week in winter; advance ticket purchases are necessary. Eurolines' website lists representatives in Europe.

The **Eurolines Pass** (15-/30-day pass high season fare late-Jun–mid-Sep €329/439, under 26 €279/359, cheaper mid-Sep–Jun) allows unlimited travel to 40 cities across Europe.

Travelling from Marseille or Toulon, it will cost €170 to Amsterdam and €130/103 to Rome/Florence from Nice, Marseille or Toulon.

Intercars (www.intercars.fr in French) links France with cities in southern and central Europe. In Provence it has a number of **bus-station offices** (Nice ☎ 04 93 80 08 70; nice@intercars.fr; Aix-en-Provence ☎ 04 91 50 57 55; Marseille ☎ 04 91 50 08 66; marseille@intercars.fr; Nîmes ☎ 04 66 29 84 22; nimes@intercars.fr). Sample return fares from Nice include Budapest (€152, 22 hours) and Warsaw (€176, 29 hours). Discounts are available for children, and for those aged under 26 and over 60 (approximately 5% to 10% off a full adult fare).

Linebus (Avignon ☎ 04 90 86 88 67; Nîmes ☎ 04 66 29 50 62; Barcelona ☎ 932 65 07 00; www.linebus.com in Spanish with English sections) links Avignon and Nîmes with Barcelona (€98 and €67, 7½ hours) and other cities in Spain. Children aged four to 12 receive a 50% discount and people under 26 and over 60 are eligible for a smaller reduction.

TRAIN

Paris has connections to cities all over Europe. Within the region, Nice is the major hub, sitting on the busy Barcelona–Rome train line. Day and overnight trains run in both directions. A single 1st-/2nd-class fare from Nice to Rome costs around €85/55 (plus €22 for a couchette) for the 10-hour journey. There are also direct train services between Nice and Milan (€50/33, five hours). Marseille also has trains to destinations all over France with connections across Europe.

A helpful resource is the info-packed website **The Man in Seat 61** (www.seat61.com), which lists train timetables and travel tips for France and beyond.

UK

BUS

Eurolines UK (☎ 0870 514 3219; www.nationalexpress.com/eurolines) runs from London's Victoria coach station via the Dover–Calais channel crossing to Avignon, Marseille, Nice and Toulon. All direct return fares are around UK£100.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

High-speed shuttle trains operated by **Eurotunnel** (in the UK ☎ 0870-535 3535, in France ☎ 03 21 00 61

00; www.eurotunnel.com) shuttle between Folkestone via the Channel Tunnel to Coquelles, 5km southwest of Calais. Journey time is 35 minutes. Trains run 24 hours a day, every day of the year, with up to five departures an hour. A high-season return fare for a car and passengers costs around UK£200, but there are numerous promotional fares. The fee for a bicycle, including its rider, is UK£32 return; advance reservations are mandatory. LPG and CNG tanks are not permitted, which eliminates many campers and caravans.

TRAIN

The highly civilised **Eurostar** (France ☎ 08 92 35 35 39; www.voyages-sncf.com; UK ☎ 08705 186 186; www.eurostar.com) whisks you between London and Paris in just 2½ hours. There are direct daily services between London and Ashford (Kent) and Paris, Brussels, Lille, Parc Disneyland Paris and Calais-Fréthun. A direct seasonal service operates on Saturday from London and Ashford to Avignon (July to early September).

Eurostar fares vary enormously. A standard 2nd-class one-way ticket from London to Paris costs UK£149; from Paris, the standard fare to London is €223.50. You'll get the best deals if you book a return journey, stay over a Saturday night, book 14 or seven days ahead, if you're under 25 or if you're a student. Student travel agencies may have youth fares not available directly from Eurostar. Eurail pass holders receive discounts. For information about train travel from northern France destinations to Provence & the Côte d'Azur, see below.

Within France

BUS

French transport policy is completely biased in favour of its state-owned rail system: inter-regional bus services are an alien concept. Take a train.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

For detailed information on driving, see p424.

TRAIN

France's efficient national rail network is run by the state-owned **Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer** (SNCF; www.sncf.fr).

SNCF's pride and joy is the **Train à Grande Vitesse** (TGV; www.tgv.com) high-speed train service.

TGV Sud-Est links Paris with Dijon and Lyon, from where the TGV Rhône-Alpes continues southeast to Valence. Here, the TGV Méditerranée zips at 310km/h to Avignon where the superfast track splits east to Marseille and west to Nîmes. Avignon and Aix-en-Provence have out-of-town TGV train stations, separate from the town-centre stations used by regional trains. Sample 1st-/2nd-class single TGV fares between Paris and Provence destinations include: Avignon (€110/80, 3½ hours), Marseille (€120/80, three hours), Nice (€160/120, seven hours) and Orange (€120/80, 4½ hours).

The SNCF also operates cheaper, slower rail services. Both *grande ligne* (main line) trains and those operated by **Transport Express Régional** (TER; www.ter-sncf.com) link smaller cities and towns with the TGV network. Many towns not on the SNCF network are linked with nearby railheads by buses.

Under Motorail's Auto Train scheme you can travel with your car on a train. Cars are loaded on the train one hour before departure and unloaded 30 minutes after arrival. This service is available at Avignon, St-Raphaël, Marseille and Nice train stations. Information in the UK is available from Rail Europe (see p425). In France, ticketing is handled by SNCF.

Generally, bicycles are transported free of charge if they are packed down into a special 120cm x 190cm transit bag (available from bike shops). Some main-line trains (flagged with a bicycle symbol on timetables) don't make this requirement. On night trains and certain TGV Sud-Est and TGV Méditerranée routes, bikes can only be transported in a four-to-six-bicycle wagon, which must be reserved in advance (€10). See the multilingual SNCF brochure *Guide Train & Vélo* (free), available at train stations.

The SNCF baggage service **Sernam** (☎ 08 25 84 58 45) will transport your bicycle door-to-door in France for €49, with bicycles delivered within 48 hours excluding Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

European Bike Express (☎ 01642-251 440; www.bike-express.co.uk) transports cyclists and their bikes from the UK to places all over France.

RIVER

Provence is well connected by waterways, thanks to the Rhône. The most popular canal route to Provence is via the Canal du Midi, a

240km waterway that runs from Toulouse to the Bassin de Thau between Agde and Sète, from where you continue northeast to Aigues-Mortes in the Camargue. From Toulouse the Canal du Midi is connected with the Gardonne River leading west to the Atlantic Ocean at Bordeaux.

SEA

Provence has ferry links with Corsica, Italy and North Africa; boats sail to and from Nice, Toulon and Marseille. Rental cars cannot be taken on ferries.

Algeria

Travel in Algeria is considered dangerous for foreign tourists due to ongoing political troubles.

Algérie Ferries (www.algerieferreries.com) operates ferries between Marseille and Algiers, Bejaia, Annaba, Skikda and Oran (20 hours). A one-way/return fare on any of these routes costs €280/320 for a *fauteuil* (armchair seat) and €400/470 in a four-bunk cabin, plus port taxes of around €10 each way.

Italy

SNCM (p422) runs two or three car ferries weekly from Marseille or Toulon to Porto Torres on the Italian island of Sardinia (Sardaigne in French). Sailing time is 17 hours.

A one-way passage in a *fauteuil* costs €70/81 in the low/high season (children aged four to 12 €24/37). There are discounts for passengers aged 12 to 25, InterRail Pass holders and those aged over 60. Transporting a car costs an extra €75/109. Motorcycles/bicycles are €43/16 to transport. Allow around €5 per passenger for port taxes plus another €5 per vehicle.

Tickets and information are available from SNCM offices in Provence. In Sardinia, tickets are sold by SNCF agent **Paglietti Petertours** (☎ 079-51 44 77; Corso Vittorio Emanuele 19) in Porto Torres.

Tunisia

SNCM (p422) and Tunisian **CTN** (Compagnie Tunisienne de Navigation; ☎ 216-135 33 31; 122 rue de Yougoslavie, Tunis) together operate car ferries between Marseille/Toulon and Tunis (20 to 22 hours). A one-way *fauteuil* costs €160 (children aged two to 16 €77) year-round. A berth in a cabin starts at €12. If you're taking a vehicle (€364), it's vital to book ahead.

UK & Ireland

There are no direct ferries to Provence, but you can take a ferry year-round from Dover to Calais or from Folkestone to Boulogne (the shortest and cheapest crossings). Longer channel crossings include Newhaven to Dieppe, Poole to Cherbourg, and Portsmouth to Cherbourg/Le Havre/Ouistreham/St-Malo. Fares vary crazily according to demand. Some companies and their routes:

Brittany Ferries (www.brittany-ferries.co.uk; France ☎ 0298 292 800; Ireland ☎ 021-427 7801; UK ☎ 08703 665 333) Poole–Cherbourg (4½ hours), Portsmouth–Caen (5½ hours), Portsmouth–Cherbourg (three hours), Portsmouth–St-Malo (10¾ hours), Plymouth–Roscoff (six hours), Cork–Roscoff (13 hours).

Condor Ferries (www.condorferries.co.uk; France ☎ 08 25 135 135; UK ☎ 0870 243 5140) Weymouth/Poole–St-Malo with change of vessel in Guernsey or Jersey (5½ hours/4½ hours).

Irish Ferries (www.irishferries.ie; France ☎ 02 33 23 44 44; Ireland ☎ 0818 300 400; France ☎ 02 98 61 17 17; UK ☎ 08705 17 17) Rosslare–Roscoff (18 hours), Rosslare–Cherbourg (19½ hours).

Norfolk Line (www.hoverspeed.co.uk; France ☎ 03 28 28 95 50; UK ☎ 0870 870 10 20) Dover–Dunkerque (1¼ hours).

P&O Ferries (www.poferries.com; France ☎ 0825 120 156; UK ☎ 0870 5980 333) Dover–Calais (2½ hours).

SeaFrance (www.seafrance.com; France ☎ 0825 0825 05, ☎ 0870 443 1653) Dover–Calais (2½ hours).

Within France

CORSICA

Ferries between mainland France and Corsica are operated by several lines:

Corsica Ferries (☎ 08 25 09 50 95; www.corsicaferries.com) Runs year-round from Nice to Ajaccio, Bastia, Calvi and Île Rousse, and from Toulon to Ajaccio and Bastia.

La Méditerranée/CMN (☎ 08 10 20 13 20; www.cmn.fr) An SNCM subsidiary, this company has year-round sailings between Marseille and Ajaccio, Bastia and Propriano.

Société Nationale Maritime Corse-Méditerranée (SNCM; ☎ 08 91 70 18 01; www.sncm.fr) Services from Nice, Marseille and Toulon to Ajaccio, Bastia, Calvi, Île Rousse, Porto Vecchio and Propriano.

Daytime sailings from Nice take around four hours; ferries from Marseille and Toulon are usually overnight.

In summer up to eight ferries depart daily (reservations are essential); in winter as few as eight depart a week and fares are much cheaper. In bad weather, boats can be cancelled at short notice (often on the day of departure).

Fares start at around €24 per adult one way for Nice to Bastia (discount and promotional specials are advertised in low season). Cabins start from an additional €25. Transporting a small car costs upwards of €53 one way. Count on adding from around €18 one way for taxes.

GETTING AROUND

AIR

Air France is the leading carrier on domestic routes, linking Bordeaux, Brest, Clermont-Ferrand, Lille, Lyon, Metz-Nancy, Mulhouse, Nantes, Strasbourg and Toulouse with Avignon, Nice, Nîmes, Marseille and Toulon.

No-frills airline easyJet has cheap fares from Paris to Nice (sometimes as low as €30).

Compagnie Corse Méditerranée (CCM; ☎ 0 820 820 820; www.ccm-airlines.com) flies from Bastia and Ajaccio to Marseille and Nice year-round. Online agencies include **Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 08 25 00 07 47; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr).

There are no scheduled inter-regional plane flights within Provence, but high-fliers can take to the air by helicopter. A handy online source of helicopter information is **Héli Riviera** (www.heliriviera.com).

BICYCLE

Provence – particularly the Luberon – is an eminently cyclable region, thanks to its extensive network of inland back roads with relatively light traffic. They're an ideal way to view Provence's celebrated lavender fields, vineyards and olive groves. On the coast there are also several excellent cycle paths; see individual chapters for information. Cycling in national parks in Provence is forbidden.

By law your bicycle must have two functioning brakes, a bell, a red reflector on the back and yellow reflectors on the pedals. After sunset and when visibility is poor, cyclists must turn on a white light in front and a red one in the rear. Cyclists must ride in single file when being overtaken by vehicles or other cyclists.

See p421 for information about transporting your bicycle by train.

More information of interest to cyclists can be found on p81. A useful resource is the **Fédération Française de Cyclisme** (☎ 01 49 35 69 00; www.ffc.fr in French).

BOAT

Barges such as the beautifully restored **Le Phénicien** (☎ 04 42 41 19 14; www.rhone-croisiere.com) run tours along the Rhône. A six-night trip between Avignon and Aigues-Mortes aboard **Le Phénicien** including chef-prepared meals, drinks, daily excursions and use of bicycles costs from €2500 per person.

Canal Boat

One of the most relaxing ways to see the region is to rent a houseboat and cruise along the Camargue's canals and rivers. Boats usually accommodate two to 12 passengers and can be rented on a weekly basis. Anyone over 18 can pilot a river boat without a licence: learning the ropes takes about half an hour. The speed limit is 6km/h on canals and 10km/h on rivers.

The following companies rent out boats in Provence. Prices are for July and August; rates drop by around a third in the low season.

Crown Blue Line Camargue (in France ☎ 04 68 94 52 72, in the UK ☎ 0870 160 5634; www.crownblueine.com) Rates around €1690 per week for a six-berth boat.

Rive de France (☎ 08 10 80 80 80; www.rive-de-france.tm.fr) Rates around €1785 per week for a six-berth boat.

Ferry

A plethora of boats plies the waters from the coast to the offshore islands. Ferries also operate to/from St-Tropez to St-Raphaël, Port Grimaud and Ste-Maxime in the warmer months (generally April to October). See the relevant regional chapters For seasonal schedules and prices.

Yacht

One of Europe's largest *ports de plaisance* (pleasure ports) is located at Port Vauban, in Antibes.

Yachts with or without a crew can be hired at most marinas along the coast, including the less-pompous sailing centres at Ste-Maxime and Le Lavandou. A complete list of yacht-rental places is included in the free booklet *Nautisme: Côte d'Azur Riviera* published by the Comité Régional du Tourisme Riviera Côte d'Azur (available from tourist offices).

For up-to-date marina or harbour master information, contact the **Fédération Française des Ports de Plaisance** (FFPP; ☎ 01 43 35 26 26; www.ffports-plaisance.com in French).

Road Distances (km) & Road Tolls (euro)

	Avignon	Cannes	Nice	Nîmes	Menton	Monaco	Orange	Toulon
Avignon	98	4.40						
Cannes	166	226	15.90					
Nice	205	262	34	2.50				
Nîmes	123	50	250	279	18.80			
Menton	236	287	66	5.50	30	315	21.80	
Monaco	228	285	58	20	310	12	22.10	
Orange	115	7.70	29	1.10	243	274	56	2.60
Toulon	65	4.40	10.70	120	143	185	8.10	180
Bordeaux	648	46.20	573	37.60	775	804	532	836
Calais	1071	77	982	70.40	1204	1232	1011	1259
Lyons	328	19.30	231	16.50	448	31.10	253	504
Paris	781	56.10	692	41.60	911	57.60	720	966
Toulouse	407	25.40	331	22.10	534	36.90	562	291
Aix/Marseille								
Avignon								
Cannes								
Nice								
Nîmes								
Menton								
Monaco								
Orange								
Toulon								



BUS

Services and routes are extremely limited in rural areas. Bus services are more efficient between towns served by only a few (or no) trains.

Autocars (regional buses) are operated by a muddling host of different bus companies, which usually have an office at the *gare routière* (bus station) in the cities they serve. One company generally sells tickets for all the buses operating from the same station.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Having your own wheels is vital to discover the region's least-touched backwaters, with many nooks and crannies impossible to uncover by public transport. Except in traffic-plagued high season, it's easy to drive on the Côte d'Azur.

There are four types of intercity roads, which have alphanumeric designations:

Autoroutes (eg A8) Rapid-transit multilane highways, usually with *peages* (tolls).

Routes Nationales (N, RN) National highways.

Routes Départementales (D) Local roads.

Routes Communales (C, V) Minor rural roads.

Autoroutes in southern France are managed by the **Autoroutes du Sud de la France** (www.asf.fr) and the **Société des Autoroutes Estérel Côte d'Azur-Provence-Alpes** (www.escota.com). The national **Association des Sociétés Françaises d'Autoroutes** (☎ 08 92 68 10 77; www.autoroutes.fr) has masses of traffic-related information online.

The websites www.viamichelin.com and www.mappy.fr plot itineraries between specified departure and arrival points.

Bring Your Own Vehicle

If you bring your own vehicle to France, you'll need registration papers, unlimited third-party liability insurance and a valid driving licence. In the UK, contact the **RAC** (☎ 08705 722 722; www.rac.co.uk) or the **AA** (☎ 0870 600 0371; www.theaa.com) for more advice. In other countries, contact your appropriate automobile association.

Vehicles entering France must display a sticker identifying their country of registration. A right-hand-drive vehicle brought from the UK or Ireland has to have deflectors fitted to the headlights to avoid dazzling oncoming traffic. A reflective warning triangle, to

be used in the event of breakdown, must be carried in your car.

Make sure your car is fitted with winter or all-season tyres if there's a chance you'll be driving through snow.

Driving Licence & Documents

All drivers must carry at all times: a national ID card or passport; a valid driver's licence (*permis de conduire*; most foreign licences can be used in France for up to a year); papers of car ownership, known as a *carte grise* (grey card); and proof of third-party (liability) in-

surance. If you're stopped by the police and don't have one or more of these documents, you risk a hefty on-the-spot fine.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Be warned that many service stations close on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. Some petrol pumps do stay open after hours, but you have to pay by credit card. *Essence* (petrol or gasoline), also known as *carburant* (fuel), is most expensive at the rest stops along the *autoroutes* and is cheapest at supermarkets.

TRAIN PASSES & DISCOUNT FARES

The following passes are sold at student travel agencies, major train stations within Europe and the Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer (SNCF) subsidiary **Rail Europe** (in Canada ☎ 1 800 361 7245, in the UK ☎ 0870 5848 848, in the USA ☎ 1 800 438 7245; www.raileurope.com).

SNCF Discount Fares & Passes

Fantastic deals are available on the website www.sncf.com. Last-minute reductions of up to 50% off are published on the site every Tuesday, and Prem's ('early bird deals') are available for online bookings made three months to two weeks in advance. These tickets cannot be exchanged or refunded.

Discounted fares and passes are available at all SNCF stations. Children aged under four travel free of charge; those aged four to 11 travel for half-price. Discounted fares (25% reduction) applies, subject to the trains and conditions of reservation, to: travellers aged 12 to 25, seniors aged over 60, one to four adults travelling with a child aged four to 11, two people taking a return journey together or anyone taking a return journey of at least 200km and spending a Saturday night away.

Guaranteed reductions of 25% to 50% are available with a **Carte 12-25** (€49) aimed at travellers aged 12 to 25; the **Carte Enfant Plus** (€65) for one to four adults travelling with a child aged four to 11; and a **Carte Sénior** (€50) for those aged over 60. A **Carte Escapades** (€99) for those aged 26 to 59 guarantees savings of 25% on a return journey of at least 200km including a Saturday night away.

If you're spending three months to one year in France, ask about *Fréquence* travel cards offering savings of up to 50%.

The **France Railpass** entitles nonresidents of France to unlimited travel on SNCF trains for four days over a one-month period. In 2nd class it costs US\$229; each additional day of travel costs US\$30. The **France Youthpass** entitles holders to four days of travel over a one-month period. In 2nd class it costs US\$169, plus US\$23 for each extra day. These two passes can be purchased from travel agencies, or online through agencies such as www.raileurope.com.

European Train Passes

If you're planning an extensive European journey, consider buying a **Eurail** (in the USA ☎ 1 888 667 9734; www.eurail.com) pass, available to non-European residents, or a Euro Domino or **InterRail** (www.interrailnet.com) pass, available to European residents. All are valid on the national train network and allow unlimited travel for varying periods of time.

Most train passes must be validated at a train station ticket window before you begin your first journey, in order to begin the period of validity.

There are a number of websites to help you work out whether a pass will be economical for the itinerary you have in mind, including **Railkey** (www.railkey.com).



If your car is *en panne* (breaks down), you'll have to find a garage that handles your *marque* (make of car). Peugeot, Renault and Citroën garages are common, but if you have a non-French car you may have trouble finding someone to service it in more remote areas.

Hire

Prebooking your vehicle always works out cheaper. If you've left it too late, national French firms like ADA or National-Citer tend to be better value than international companies.

ADA (☎ 08 25 16 91 69; www.ada-sa.fr in French)

Auto Europe (☎ 1 888 223 5555; www.autoeurope.com) US-based online hire company.

Avis (☎ 08 20 05 05 05; www.avis.com)

Budget (☎ 01 41 22 19 89; www.budget.com)

EasyCar (in the UK ☎ 0906 33 33 33; www.easycar.com)

Europcar (☎ 08 25 82 54 21; www.europcar.com)

Hertz (☎ 08 25 09 13 13; www.hertz.com)

Holiday Autos (☎ 0870 400 4461; www.holidayautos.co.uk) UK-based online hire company.

National-Citer (☎ 08 25 16 12 20; www.citer.com)

Most rental companies require the driver to be over 21 years and have had a driving licence for at least one year. Be sure that you understand what your liabilities are and what's included in the price (injury insurance, tax, collision damage waiver etc), and how many 'free' kilometres you'll get. *Kilométrage illimité* (unlimited mileage) means you can drive to your heart's content. You will probably be asked to leave a signed credit-card slip without a sum written on it as a *caution* (deposit). Make sure that it's destroyed when you return the car.

Note that rental cars with automatic transmission are *very* rare in France. You will usually need to order one well in advance and there's a much more limited (and invariably costlier) range of models to choose from.

All rental cars registered in France have a distinctive number on the licence plate, making them instantly identifiable (including to thieves – never leave anything of value in the car, even in the boot).

Insurance

Unlimited third-party liability insurance is mandatory for all automobiles. If you rent a car, this will be included in the package; however, collision damage waivers (CDW) vary greatly between rental companies. When

comparing rates, the most important thing to check is the *franchise* (excess/deductible), which is usually €500 for a small car. If you're in an accident where you are at fault, or the car is stolen or damaged by an unknown party, this is the amount you are liable to pay before the policy kicks in. Some US credit-card companies (such as Amex) have built-in CDW, although you may have to pay up, then reclaim the money when you get home.

Road Conditions

If you're planning to drive along the coast in July or August, be prepared to take hours to move a few kilometres. For traffic reports in English, tune into 107.7MHz FM, which gives updates every 30 minutes in summer.

Road Rules

French law requires that all passengers, including those in the back seat, wear seat belts. Children weighing less than 10kg must travel in backward-facing child seats; children weighing up to 36kg must travel in child seats in the vehicle's rear seat. A passenger car is permitted to carry a maximum of five people. North American drivers should remember that turning right on a red light is illegal in France.

Under the *priorité à droite* rule, any car entering an intersection (including a T-junction) from a road on your right has the right of way, unless the intersection is marked *vous n'avez pas la priorité* (you do not have right of way) or *cédez le passage* (give way). *Priorité à droite* is also suspended on priority roads, which are marked by an up-ended yellow square with a black square in the middle.

Mobile phones may only be used when accompanied by a hands-free kit or speakerphone. British drivers committing driving offences in France can receive on-the-spot fines and get penalty points added to their driving licence.

Riders of any type of two-wheeled vehicle with a motor (except motor-assisted bicycles) must wear a helmet. No special licence is required to ride a motorbike with an engine smaller than 50cc.

In forested areas such as Haute-Provence, the Massif des Maures and the Massif de l'Estérel unpaved tracks signposted DFCI (*défense forestière contre l'incendie*) are for fire crews to gain quick entry in the event of a fire: they are strictly off limits to private vehicles.

ALCOHOL

It is illegal to drive with a blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) of over 0.05% (0.5g per litre of blood). The police conduct frequent random breathalyser tests.

SPEED LIMITS

You will be fined for going 10km/h over the speed limit. Unless otherwise posted, a limit of 50km/h applies in *all* areas designated as built-up, no matter how rural they may appear.

Speed limits outside built-up areas:

- 90km/h (80km/h if it's raining) on undivided N and D highways
- 110km/h (100km/h if it's raining) on dual carriageways (divided highways) or short sections of highway with a divider strip
- 130km/h (110km/h if it's raining, 60km/h in icy conditions) on autoroutes

TRAIN

The SNCF's regional rail network (Map p424) in Provence, served by **TER** (www.ter-sncf.com/paca), is comfortable and efficient. It comprises two routes: one that follows the coast (disappearing inland for the stretch between Hyères and St-Raphaël), with an inland track from Cannes to Grasse; and another that traverses

the interior, running from Marseille through Aix-en-Provence, Manosque and Sisteron before leaving the region northwards. A narrow-gauge railway links Nice with Digne-les-Bains in Haute-Provence (see p245).

It's important that you time-stamp your ticket in a *composteur* (a yellow post at the entrance to the platform) before boarding or you risk a hefty fine.

Reservations

Reservations are not mandatory on most regional trains. However, in summer it's advisable to buy your ticket for any straight-through trains well in advance.

Train Passes

Two regional passes are available to travellers of all ages, from July to September.

Carte Bermuda (€5) One-day pass available weekends and public holidays giving unlimited 2nd-class travel between Marseille and Miramas on the Côte Bleue.

Carte Isabelle (€12) One-day pass allowing unlimited train travel along the coast between Théoule-sur-Mer and Ventimiglia, and inland between Nice and Tende. Cannot be used on TGVs. Allows 1st class travel at no additional cost.

For countrywide SNCF discounts and rail passes, see p425.

Health

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Travel health depends on your predeparture preparations, your daily health care while travelling and how you handle any medical problem that does develop. Provence and the Côte d'Azur are healthy places to travel. Your main risks are likely to be sunburn, foot blisters, insect bites and mild stomach problems from eating and drinking too much.

BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. See your dentist before a long trip, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen or from Switzerland, Iceland, Norway or Liechtenstein, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) covers you for emergency health care or in the case of accident while in the region. It will not

cover you for nonemergencies or emergency repatriation. Every family member needs a separate card. In the UK, application forms are available from post offices or can be downloaded from the Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk).

Citizens of other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and the country visited. If you do need health insurance, strongly consider a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No vaccinations are required to travel to Provence and the Côte d'Azur. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent DVT developing on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones) try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight

and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep and so on) as soon as possible.

IN PROVENCE & THE CÔTE D'AZUR

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Excellent health care is readily available and for minor illnesses pharmacists can give valuable advice and sell over-the-counter medications. They can also advise when more-specialised help is required and point you in the right direction. The standard of dental care is usually good, however, it is sensible to have a dental check-up before a long trip.

When you ring ☎ 15, the 24-hour dispatchers of the Service d'Aide Médicale d'Urgence (SAMU; Emergency Medical Aid Service) will take details of your problem and send out a private ambulance with a driver or, if necessary, a mobile intensive-care unit. For less serious problems SAMU can dispatch a doctor for a house call. If you prefer to be taken to a particular hospital, mention this to the ambulance crew, because the usual procedure is to take you to the nearest one. In emergency cases (for example, those requiring intensive-care units), billing will be taken care of later. Otherwise, you need to pay in cash at the time.

If your problem is not sufficiently serious to call SAMU, but you still need to consult a doctor at night, call the 24-hour doctor service, operational in most towns in the region. Telephone numbers are listed in the relevant town sections under Medical Services, or see the Quick Reference page on the inside back cover.

DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution (eg Dioralyte). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain you should seek medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Hay Fever

Those who suffer from hay fever can look forward to sneezing their way around rural

Provence in May and June when the pollen count is at its highest.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion occurs following excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heat exhaustion, replace lost fluids by drinking water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans.

Hypothermia

Proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting hypothermia. Even on a hot day in the mountains the weather can change rapidly; carry waterproof garments and warm layers, and inform others of your route.

Acute hypothermia follows a sudden drop in temperature over a short time. Chronic hypothermia is caused by a gradual loss of temperature over hours.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless rewarming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared bodily warmth.

Insect Bites & Stings

Mosquitoes are found in most parts of Europe. They may not carry malaria but can cause irritation and infected bites. Use a DEET-based insect repellent.

Sand flies are found around the Mediterranean beaches. They usually cause only a nasty itchy bite but can carry a rare skin disorder called cutaneous leishmaniasis.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Emergency contraception is available with a doctor's prescription in the region. Condoms are readily available. When buying condoms, look for a European CE mark, which means they have been rigorously tested, and then keep them in a cool dry place or they may crack and perish.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

All travellers with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical treatment. Make sure the children are up to date with routine vaccinations, and

discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year.

If your child has vomiting or diarrhoea, lost fluids and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders for reconstituting with boiled water.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern. If

using oral contraceptives, keep in mind that some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working and lead to the risk of pregnancy – remember to take condoms with you just in case. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

Language

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Arming yourself with some French will broaden your travel experience, endear you to the locals and, in rural Haute-Provence (where tourism hasn't yet developed enough to persuade people in service industries to speak English), ensure an easier ride around the region. On the coast, practically everyone you are likely to meet speaks basic English (and, in many cases, a rash of other European languages).

Standard French is taught and spoken in Provence. However, travellers accustomed to schoolbook French, or the unaccented, standard French spoken in cities and larger towns, will find the flamboyant French spoken in Provence's rural heart (and by most people in Marseille) somewhat bewildering. Here, words are caressed by the heavy southern accent and end with a flourish, vowels are sung, and the traditional rolling 'r' is turned into a mighty long trill. The word *douze* (the number 12), for example, becomes 'douz-eh' with an emphasised 'e', and *pain* (bread) becomes 'peng'. Once your ears become accustomed to the local lilt you'll soon start picking up the beat.

PROVENÇAL

Despite the bilingual signs that visitors see when they enter most towns and villages, the region's mother tongue – Provençal – is scarcely heard on the street or in the home. Just a handful of older people in rural Provence (Prouvènço) keep alive the rich lyrics and poetic language of their ancestors.

Provençal (*prouvençau* in Provençal) is a dialect of *langue d'oc* (Occitan), the traditional language of southern France. Its grammar is closer to Catalan and Spanish than to French. In the grand age of courtly love between the 12th and 14th centuries, Provençal was the literary language of France and northern Spain and even used as far afield as Italy. Medieval troubadours and poets created melodies and elegant poems motivated by the ideal of courtly love, and Provençal blossomed.

The 19th century witnessed a revival of Provençal after its rapid displacement by *langue d'oïl*, the language of northern France that originated from the vernacular Latin spoken by the Gallo-Romans and that gave birth to modern French (*français* in Provençal). The revival was spearheaded by Frédéric Mistral (1830–1914), a poet from Vaucluse, whose works in Provençal won him the 1904 Nobel Prize for Literature.

FRENCH

PRONUNCIATION

Most of the letters in the French alphabet are pronounced more or less the same as their English counterparts; a few that may cause confusion are listed below.

- c** before **e** and **i**, as the 's' in 'sit'
before **a**, **o** and **u** it's pronounced as English 'k'
- ç** always as the 's' in 'sit'
- h** always silent
- j** as the 's' in 'leisure'; written 'zh' in the pronunciation guides
- r** from the back of the throat while constricting the muscles to restrict the flow of air

n, m where a syllable ends in a single **n** or **m**, these letters are not pronounced, but the preceding vowel is given a nasal pronunciation; note that in the pronunciation guides, ‘un’ and ‘on’ are nasal sounds.

s often not pronounced in plurals or at the end of words

BE POLITE!

While the French rightly or wrongly have a reputation for assuming that everyone should speak French – until WWI it was the international language of culture and diplomacy – you’ll find any attempt you make to communicate in French will be much appreciated.

What is often perceived as arrogance is often just a subtle objection to the assumption by many travellers that they should be able to speak English anywhere, in any situation, and be understood. You can easily avoid the problem by approaching people and addressing them in French. Even if the only phrase you learn is *Pardon, madame/monsieur, parlez-vous anglais?* (Excuse me, madam/sir, do you speak English?), you’re sure to be more warmly received than if you stick to English.

An important distinction is made in French between *tu* and *vous*, which both mean ‘you’; *tu* is only used when addressing people you know well, children or animals. If you’re speaking to an adult who isn’t a personal friend, you should use *vous* unless the person invites you to use *tu*. In general, younger people insist less on this distinction, and you will find that in many cases they use *tu* from the beginning of an acquaintance.

GENDER

All nouns in French are either masculine or feminine and adjectives reflect the gender of the noun they modify. The feminine form of many nouns and adjectives is indicated by a silent **e** added to the masculine form, as in *ami* and *amie* (the masculine and feminine for ‘friend’).

In the following phrases both masculine and feminine forms have been indicated where necessary. The masculine form comes first, separated from the feminine by a slash.

a preceding article: ‘the/a/some,’ *le/un/du* (m), *la/une/de la* (f); or one of the possessive adjectives, ‘my/your/his/her,’ *mon/ton/son* (m), *ma/ta/sa* (f). French is unlike English, in that the possessive adjective agrees in number and gender with the thing in question: ‘his/her mother’ is *sa mère*.

ACCOMMODATION

I’m looking for	<i>Je cherche ...</i>	zher shersh ...
a ...		
campground	<i>un camping</i>	un kom-peeng
guesthouse	<i>une pension (de famille)</i>	ewn pon-syon (der fa-mee-ler)
hotel	<i>un hôtel</i>	un o-tel
youth hostel	<i>une auberge de jeunesse</i>	ewn o-berzh der zher-nes

Where can I find a cheap hotel?

Où est-ce qu’on peut trouver un hôtel pas cher?
oo es-kon per troo-vay un o-tel pa shair

What is the address?

Quelle est l’adresse?
kel e la-dres

Could you write the address, please?

Est-ce que vous pourriez écrire l’adresse, s’il vous plaît?
e-sker voo poo-ryay e-kreer la-dres seel voo play

Do you have any rooms available?

Est-ce que vous avez des chambres libres?
e-sker voo-za-vay day shom-brer lee-brer

I’d like (a) ...	<i>Je voudrais ...</i>	zher voo-dray ...
single room	<i>une chambre à un lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a un lee
double-bed room	<i>une chambre avec un grand lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek un gron lee
twin room	<i>une chambre avec des lits jumeaux</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek day lee zhew-mo
room with a bathroom	<i>une chambre avec une salle de bains</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek ewn sal der bun
to share a dorm	<i>coucher dans un dortoir</i>	koo-sheer don zun dor-twa

How much is it ...? *Quel est le prix ...?*

kel e ler pree ...

per night	<i>par nuit</i>	par nwee
per person	<i>par personne</i>	par per-son

May I see the room?

Est-ce que je peux voir la chambre? es-ker zher per vwa la shom-brer

Where is the bathroom?

Où est la salle de bains? oo e la sal der bun

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone or written requests)

To ...	<i>À l’attention de ...</i>
From ...	<i>De la part de ...</i>
Date	<i>Date</i>
I’d like to book ... in the name of ... from ... (date) to ...	<i>Je voudrais réserver ... au nom de ... du ... au ...</i>
credit card	<i>carte de crédit</i>
number	<i>numéro</i>
expiry date	<i>date d’expiration</i>
Please confirm availability and price.	<i>Veillez confirmer la disponibilité et le prix.</i>

Where is the toilet?

Où sont les toilettes? oo-son lay twa-let

I’m leaving today.

Je pars aujourd’hui. zher par o-zhoor-dwee

We’re leaving today.

On part aujourd’hui. on par o-zhoor-dwee

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>Bonjour.</i>	bon-zhoor
Goodbye.	<i>Au revoir.</i>	o-rer-vwa
Yes.	<i>Oui.</i>	wee
No.	<i>Non.</i>	no
Please.	<i>S’il vous plaît.</i>	seel voo play
Thank you.	<i>Merçi.</i>	mair-see
You’re welcome.	<i>Je vous en prie.</i>	zher voo-zon pree
	<i>De rien. (inf)</i>	der ree-en
Excuse me.	<i>Excusez-moi.</i>	ek-skew-zay-mwa
Sorry. (forgive me)	<i>Pardon.</i>	par-don

What’s your name?

Comment vous appelez-vous? (pol) ko-mon voo-za-pay-lay voo

Comment tu t’appelles? (inf) ko-mon tew ta-pel

Je m’appelle ... zher ma-pel ...

My name is ...

Je m’appelle ... zher ma-pel ...

Where are you from?

De quel pays êtes-vous? der kel pay-ee et-voo

De quel pays es-tu? (inf) der kel pay-ee e-tew

Je viens de ... zher vyen der ...

I like ... zhem ...

I don’t like ... zher nem pa ...

Just a minute. ewn mee-newt

DIRECTIONS

Where is ...?

Où est ...? oo e ...

Go straight ahead.

Continuez tout droit. kon-teen-way too drwa

Turn left.

Tournez à gauche. toor-nay a gosh

Turn right.

Tournez à droite. toor-nay a drwat

at the corner/at traffic lights

au coin/aux feux o kwun/o fer

behind	<i>derrière</i>	dair-ryair
in front of	<i>devant</i>	der-von
far (from)	<i>loin (de)</i>	lwun (der)
near (to)	<i>près (de)</i>	pray (der)
opposite	<i>en face de</i>	on fas der

SIGNS

Entrée	Entrance
Sortie	Exit
Renseignements	Information
Ouvert	Open
Fermé	Closed
Interdit	Prohibited
(Commissariat de) Police	Police Station
Toilettes/WC	Toilets
Hommes	Men
Femmes	Women

beach	<i>la plage</i>	la plazh
bridge	<i>le pont</i>	ler pon
castle	<i>le château</i>	ler sha-to
cathedral	<i>la cathédrale</i>	la ka-tay-dral
church	<i>l’église</i>	lay-gleez
gallery	<i>la galerie</i>	la galree
island	<i>l’île</i>	leel
lake	<i>le lac</i>	ler lak
main square	<i>la place centrale</i>	la plas son-tral
museum	<i>le musée</i>	ler mew-zay
old city (town)	<i>la vieille ville</i>	la vyay veel
ruins	<i>les ruines</i>	lay rween
sea	<i>la mer</i>	la mair
square	<i>la place</i>	la plas
tourist office	<i>l’office de tourisme</i>	lo-fees der too-rees-mer

HEALTH

I’m ill.	<i>Je suis malade.</i>	zher swee ma-lad
It hurts here.	<i>J’ai une douleur ici.</i>	zhay ewn doo-ler ee-see

EMERGENCIES

Help!	<i>Au secours!</i>	o skoor
Call ...!	<i>Appelez ...!</i>	a-play ...
a doctor	<i>un médecin</i>	un med-sun
the police	<i>la police</i>	la po-lees

There's been an accident!

Il y a eu un accident! eel ya ew un ak-see-don

I'm lost.

Je me suis égaré/e. (m/f) zhe me swee-zay-ga-ray

Leave me alone!

Fichez-moi la paix! fee-shay-mwa la pay

I'm ...	<i>Je suis ...</i>	zher swee ...
asthmatic	<i>asthmatique</i>	(z)as-ma-teek
diabetic	<i>diabétique</i>	dee-a-be-teek
epileptic	<i>épileptique</i>	(z)e-pee-lep-teek

I'm allergic to ...	<i>Je suis allergique ...</i>	zher swee za-lair-zheek ...
antibiotics	<i>aux antibiotiques</i>	o zon-tee-byo-teek
bees	<i>aux abeilles</i>	o za-bay-er
nuts	<i>aux noix</i>	o nwa
peanuts	<i>aux cacahuètes</i>	o ka-ka-wet
penicillin	<i>à la pénicilline</i>	a la pay-nee-see-leen

antiseptic	<i>l'antiseptique</i>	lon-tee-sep-teek
condoms	<i>des préservatifs</i>	day pray-zair-va-teef
contraceptive	<i>le contraceptif</i>	ler kon-tra-sep-teef
diarrhoea	<i>la diarrhée</i>	la dee-ya-ray
medicine	<i>le médicament</i>	ler me-dee-ka-mon
nausea	<i>la nausée</i>	la no-zay
sunblock cream	<i>la crème solaire</i>	la krem so-lair
tampons	<i>des tampons hygiéniques</i>	day tom-pon ee-zhen-eek

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak English?**

Parlez-vous anglais? par-lay-voong ong-lay

Does anyone here speak English?

Y a-t-il quelqu'un qui parle anglais? ya-teel kel-kung kee par long-glay

What does ... mean?

Que veut dire ...? ker ver deer ...

I don't understand.

Je ne comprends pas. zher ner kom-pron pa

Could you write it down, please?

Est-ce que vous pourriez l'écrire, s'il vous plaît? es-ker voo poo-ryay le-kreer seel voo play

Can you show me (on the map)?

Pouvez-vous m'indiquer (sur la carte)? poo-vay-voong mun-dee-kaa (sewr la kart)

NUMBERS

0	<i>zero</i>	ze-ro
1	<i>un</i>	un
2	<i>deux</i>	der
3	<i>trois</i>	twa
4	<i>quatre</i>	ka-trer
5	<i>cinq</i>	sungk
6	<i>six</i>	sees
7	<i>sept</i>	set
8	<i>huit</i>	weet
9	<i>neuf</i>	nerf
10	<i>dix</i>	dees
11	<i>onze</i>	onz
12	<i>douze</i>	dooz
13	<i>treize</i>	trez
14	<i>quatorze</i>	ka-torz
15	<i>quinze</i>	kunz
16	<i>seize</i>	sez
17	<i>dix-sept</i>	dee-set
18	<i>dix-huit</i>	dee-zweet
19	<i>dix-neuf</i>	deez-nerf
20	<i>vingt</i>	vung
21	<i>vingt et un</i>	vung tay un
22	<i>vingt-deux</i>	vung-der
30	<i>trente</i>	tront
40	<i>quarante</i>	ka-ront
50	<i>cinquante</i>	sung-kont
60	<i>soixante</i>	swa-sont
70	<i>soixante-dix</i>	swa-son-dees
80	<i>quatre-vingts</i>	ka-trer-vung
90	<i>quatre-vingt-dix</i>	ka-trer-vung-dees
100	<i>cent</i>	son
1000	<i>mille</i>	meel

PAPERWORK

name	<i>nom</i>	nom
nationality	<i>nationalité</i>	na-syo-na-lee-tay
date/place of birth	<i>date/place de naissance</i>	der nay-sons
sex/gender	<i>sexe</i>	seks
passport	<i>passport</i>	pas-por
visa	<i>visa</i>	vee-za

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	<i>Qui?</i>	kee
What?	<i>Quoi?</i>	kwa
What is it?	<i>Qu'est-ce que c'est?</i>	kes-ker say
When?	<i>Quand?</i>	kon
Where?	<i>Où?</i>	oo
Which?	<i>Quel/Quelle?</i>	kel
Why?	<i>Pourquoi?</i>	pooor-kwa
How?	<i>Comment?</i>	ko-mon
How much?	<i>Combien?</i>	kom-byun

SHOPPING & SERVICES**I'd like to buy ...**

Je voudrais acheter ... zher voo-dray zash-tay ...

I'm looking for ...

Je cherche ... zhe shersh ...

How much is it?

C'est combien? say kom-byun

I don't like it.

Cela ne me plaît pas. ser-la ner mer play pa

May I look at it?

Est-ce que je peux le voir? es-ker zher per ler vwar

I'm just looking.

Je regarde. zher rer-gard

It's cheap.

Ce n'est pas cher. ser nay pa shair

It's too expensive.

C'est trop cher. say tro shair

I'll take it.

Je le prends. zher ler pron

Can I pay by ...?

Est-ce que je peux payer avec ...?

es-ker zher per pay-yay a-vek ...

credit card

ma carte de crédit ma kart der kre-dee

travellers cheques

des chèques de voyage day shek der vwa-yazh

more	<i>plus</i>	plew
less	<i>moins</i>	mwa
smaller	<i>plus petit</i>	plew per-tee
bigger	<i>plus grand</i>	plew gron

a bank	<i>une banque</i>	ewn bonk
the ... embassy	<i>l'ambassade de ...</i>	lam-ba-sahd der ...
the hospital	<i>l'hôpital</i>	lo-pee-tal
the market	<i>le marché</i>	ler mar-shay
the police	<i>la police</i>	la po-lees
the post office	<i>le bureau de poste</i>	ler bew-ro der post
a public phone	<i>une cabine téléphonique</i>	ewn ka-been te-le-fo-neek
a public toilet	<i>les toilettes</i>	lay twa-let

TIME & DATES**What time is it?**

Quelle heure est-il? kel er e til

It's (8) o'clock.

Il est (huit) heures. il e (weet) er

It's half past ...

Il est (...) heures et demie. il e (...) er e der-mee

It's quarter to ...

Il est (...) heures moins le quart. il e (...) er mwan ler kar

in the morning

du matin dew ma-tun

in the afternoon

de l'après-midi der la-pray-mee-dee

in the evening

du soir dew swar

today	<i>aujourd'hui</i>	o-zhoor-dwee
tomorrow	<i>demain</i>	der-mun
yesterday	<i>hier</i>	yair

Monday	<i>lundi</i>	lun-dee
Tuesday	<i>mardi</i>	mar-dee
Wednesday	<i>mercredi</i>	mair-krer-dee
Thursday	<i>jeudi</i>	zher-dee
Friday	<i>vendredi</i>	von-drer-dee
Saturday	<i>samedi</i>	sam-dee
Sunday	<i>dimanche</i>	dee-monsh

January	<i>janvier</i>	zhon-vyay
February	<i>février</i>	fev-ryay
March	<i>mars</i>	mars
April	<i>avril</i>	a-vreel
May	<i>mai</i>	may
June	<i>juin</i>	zhwun
July	<i>juillet</i>	zhwee-yay
August	<i>août</i>	oot
September	<i>septembre</i>	sep-tom-brer
October	<i>octobre</i>	ok-to-brer
November	<i>novembre</i>	no-vom-brer
December	<i>décembre</i>	day-som-brer

TRANSPORT**Public Transport**

What time does ... leave/arrive?	<i>À quelle heure part/arrive ...?</i>	a kel er par/a-reev ...
boat	<i>le bateau</i>	ler ba-to
bus	<i>le bus</i>	ler bews
plane	<i>l'avion</i>	la-vyon
train	<i>le train</i>	ler trun

I'd like a ... ticket.	<i>Je voudrais un billet ...</i>	zher voo-dray un bee-yay ...
one-way return	<i>simple</i>	sum-pler
1st class	<i>aller-retour</i>	a-lay rer-toor
2nd class	<i>de première classe</i>	der prem-yair klas
	<i>de deuxième classe</i>	der der-zyem klas

I want to go to ...

Je voudrais aller à ... zher voo-dray a-lay a ...

The train has been delayed.

Le train est en retard. ler trun et on rer-tar

the first	<i>le premier (m)</i>	ler prer-myay
	<i>la première (f)</i>	la prer-myair
the last	<i>le dernier (m)</i>	ler dair-nyay
	<i>la dernière (f)</i>	la dair-nyair

ROAD SIGNS

Cédez la Priorité	Give Way
Danger	Danger
Défense de Stationner	No Parking
Entrée	Entrance
Interdiction de Doubler	No Overtaking
Péage	Toll
Ralentissez	Slow Down
Sens Interdit	No Entry
Sens Unique	One Way
Sortie	Exit

platform	<i>le numéro</i>	ler new-may-ro
number	<i>de quai</i>	der kay
ticket office	<i>le guichet</i>	ler gee-shay
timetable	<i>l'horaire</i>	lo-rair
train station	<i>la gare</i>	la gar

Private Transport

I'd like to hire	<i>Je voudrais</i>	zher voo-dray
a/an...	<i>louer ...</i>	loo-way ...
bicycle	<i>un vélo</i>	un vay-lo
car	<i>une voiture</i>	ewn vva-tewr
4WD	<i>un quatre-quatre</i>	un kat-kat
motorbike	<i>une moto</i>	ewn mo-to

Is this the road to ...?

C'est la route pour ...? say la root poor ...

Where's a service station?

Où est-ce qu'il y a une station-service? oo es-keel ya ewn sta-syon-ser-vees

Please fill it up.

Le plein, s'il vous plaît. ler plun seel voo play

I'd like ... litres.

Je voudrais ... litres. zher voo-dray ... lee-trer

petrol/gas	<i>essence</i>	ay-sons
diesel	<i>diesel</i>	dyay-zel

(How long) Can I park here?

(Combien de temps) Est-ce que je peux stationner ici?
(kom-byun der tom) es-ker zher per sta-syo-nay ee-see

I've run out of petrol.

Je suis en panne d'essence.
zher swee zon pan day-sons

I need a mechanic.

J'ai besoin d'un mécanicien.
zhay ber-zwun dun me-ka-nee-syun

The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...)

La voiture/moto est tombée en panne (à ...)
la vva-tewr/mo-to ay tom-bay on pan (a ...)

The car/motorbike won't start.

La voiture/moto ne veut pas démarrer.
la vva-tewr/mo-to ner ver pa day-ma-ray

I had an accident.

J'ai eu un accident. zhay ew un ak-see-don

I have a flat tyre.

Mon pneu est à plat. mom pner ay ta pla

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN**Is there a/an ...?**

Y a-t-il ...? ya teel ...

I need a/an ...

J'ai besoin ... zhay ber-zwun ...

baby change room

d'un endroit pour changer le bébé dun on-drwa poor shon-zhay ler be-be

car baby seat

d'un siège-enfant dun syezh-on-fon

child-minding service

d'une garderie dewn gar-dree

children's menu

d'un menu pour enfant dun mer-new poor on-fon

disposable nappies/diapers

de couches-culottes der koosh-kew-lot

formula

de lait maternisé de lay ma-ter-nee-zay

(English-speaking) babysitter

d'une babysitter (qui parle anglais) dewn ba-bee-see-ter (kee parl ong-glay)

highchair

d'une chaise haute dewn shay zot

potty

d'un pot de bébé dun po der be-be

pusher/stroller

d'une poussette dewn poo-set

Do you mind if I breastfeed here?

Cela vous dérange si j'allaité mon bébé ici?
ser-la voo day-ron-zhe see zha-lay-ter mon bay-bay ee-see

Are children allowed?

Les enfants sont permis?
lay zon-fon son pair-mee



Also available from Lonely Planet:
French Phrasebook

Glossary

Word gender is indicated as (m) masculine, (f) feminine; (pl) indicates plural.

abbaye (f) – abbey

anse (f) – cove

AOC – *appellation d'origine contrôlée*; wines and olive oils that have met stringent government regulations governing where, how and under what conditions the grapes or olives are grown and the wines and olive oils are fermented and bottled

arène (f) – amphitheatre

arrondissement (m) – one of several districts into which large cities, such as Marseille, are split

atelier (m) – artisan's workshop

auberge (f) – inn

auberge de jeunesse (f) – youth hostel

autoroute (f) – motorway, highway

baie (f) – bay

bastide (f) – country house

billetterie (f) – ticket office or counter

borie (f) – primitive beehive-shaped dwelling, built from dry limestone around 3500 BC

boulangerie (f) – bread shop, bakery

bureau de location (m) – ticket office

CAF – Club Alpin Français

calanque (f) – rocky inlet

carnet (m) – a book of five or 10 bus, tram or metro tickets sold at a reduced rate

cave (f) – wine or cheese cellar

centre (de) hospitalier (m) – hospital

chambre d'hôte (f) – bed and breakfast accommodation, usually in a private home

charcuterie (f) – pork butcher's shop and delicatessen; also cold meat

chateau (m) – castle or stately home

chèvre (m) – goat

col (m) – mountain pass

comité départemental du tourisme (m) – departmental tourist office

commissariat de police (m) – police station

conseil général (m) – general council

corniche (f) – coastal or cliff road

corrida (f) – bullfight

cour (f) – courtyard

cour d'honneur (f) – courtyard of honour

course Camarguaise (f) – Camargue-style bullfight

cueillette des olives (f) – olive harvest

dégustation (f) – the fine art of tasting wine, cheese, olive oil or seafood

département (m) – administrative area (department)
DFCI – *défense forestière contre l'incendie*; fire road (public access forbidden)

digue (f) – dike

domaine (m) – a wine-producing estate

eau potable (f) – drinking water

église (f) – church

épicerie (f) – grocery shop

étang (m) – lagoon, pond or lake

faïence (f) – earthenware

farandole (f) – a Provençal dance dating from the Middle Ages, particularly popular in Arles today

féria (f) – bullfighting festival

ferme auberge (f) – family-run inn attached to a farm or chateau; farmhouse restaurant

fête (f) – party or festival

flamant rose (m) – pink flamingo

formule (f) – fixed main course plus starter or dessert

fromagerie (f) – cheese shop

galets (m) – large smooth stones covering Châteauneuf du Pape vineyards

gardian (m) – Camargue horseman

gare (f) – train station

gare maritime (m) – ferry terminal

gare routière (m) – bus station

garrigue (f) – ground cover of aromatic plants; see also *maquis*

gitan (m) – Roma; Gypsy

gîte d'étape (m) – hikers' accommodation, often found in the mountains or rural areas

gîte rural (m) – country cottage

golfe (m) – gulf

grand cru (m) – wine of recognised superior quality; literally 'great growth'

grotte (f) – cave

halles (f pl) – covered market; central food market

hôtel de ville (m) – town hall

hôtel particulier (m) – private mansion

jardin (botanique) (m) – (botanic) garden

joute nautiques (f) – nautical jousting tournament

lavoir (m) – communal wash house

mairie (f) – town hall
maison de la France (f) – French tourist office abroad
maison de la presse (f) – newsagent
manade (f) – bull farm
maquis (m) – aromatic Provençal scrub, see also *garrigue*; name given to the French Resistance movement
marais (m) – marsh or swamp
marais salant (m) – saltpan
marché paysan (m) – farmers market
marché Provençal (m) – open-air market
mas (m) – Provençal farmhouse
menu (m) – meal at a fixed price with two or more courses
mistral (m) – incessant north wind
monastère (m) – monastery
Monégasque – native of Monaco
moulin à huile (m) – oil mill
musée (m) – museum

navette (f) – shuttle bus, train or boat
novillada (f) – fight between bulls of less than four years of age

office du tourisme, office de tourisme (m) – tourist office (run by a unit of local government)
ONF – Office National des Forêts; National Forests Office

papeterie (f) – stationery shop
parapente (f) – paragliding
parc national (m) – national park
parc naturel régional (m) – regional nature park
pétanque (f) – a Provençal game, not unlike lawn bowls
phare (m) – lighthouse
pic (m) – mountain peak
place (f) – square
plage (f) – beach
plan (m) – city map
plat du jour (m) – dish of the day
plongée (f) – dive
pont (m) – bridge
porte (f) – gate or door, old-town entrance
préfecture (f) – main town of a *département*
préfet (m) – prefect; regional representative of national government, based in a *préfecture*
presqu'île (f) – peninsula

prieuré (m) – priory
produits du terroir (m) – local food products

quai (m) – quay or railway platform
quartier (m) – quarter or district

rade (f) – gulf or harbour
refuge (m) – hikers' shelter (mountain hut)
région (m) – administrative region
rollers (m) – Rollerblades/inline skates
rond-point (m) – roundabout

salin (m) – salt marsh
santon (m) – traditional Provençal figurine
savon (f) – soap
savonnerie (f) – soap factory
sentier (m) – trail, footpath
sentier de grande randonnée (m) – long-distance path with alphanumeric name beginning with 'GR'
sentier littoral (m) – coastal path
sentier sous-marin (m) – underwater trail
SNCF – Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer; state-owned railway company
SNCM – Société Nationale Maritime Corse-Méditerranée; state-owned ferry company linking Corsica and mainland France
stade (m) – stadium
SRV – *sur rendez-vous*; by appointment only
syndicat d'initiative (m) – tourist office (run by an organisation of local merchants)

tabac (m) – tobacconist (also sells newspapers, bus tickets etc)
taureau (m) – bull
TGV – *train à grande vitesse*; high-speed train or bullet train
théâtre antique (m) – Roman theatre
tour d'horloge (f) – clock tower
trottinette (f) – micro scooter

vendange (f) – grape harvest
vieille ville (f) – old town
vieux port (m) – old port
vigneron (m) – wine grower
vin de garde (m) – a wine best drunk after several years in storage
VTT (m) – *vélo tout terrain*; mountain bike

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