



CUT-OUT-AND-GO GUIDE | ARTY NICE



instant escapes

Arty Nice

This glamorous city razzles and dazzles, with art at its very heart

A century ago, Nice's fabled 300 days of sun a year bedazzled Matisse and Chagall. Pals, including Picasso and Dufy, stopped by to take in the scene. Their legacy is a thriving hub of contemporary galleries and ateliers, not to mention more museums than any French city outside Paris. It's the picture-perfect weekend... **By Tristan Rutherford**



SEE & DO

● The Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain (MAMAC, Place Yves Klein; mamac-nice.org; ① on map) is Nice's temple to 20th-century art. **Every major player, including Andy Warhol** (the collection features his sad rejection letters from New York's MoMA), **is exhibited across 10 light-filled salons.** The €9 ticket also gives you entry to every municipal art museum in town for 24 hours, including the Musée Matisse ②, the Musée des Beaux-Arts ③ and the Théâtre de la Photographie ④.

● Madame Augier, the nonagenarian proprietor of Hotel Negresco on the Promenade des Anglais (hotel-negresco-nice.com; ⑤), was **feted as Nice's artsy matriarch by Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí.** Gain access to her art-filled 'museum hotel' by taking tea at Le Relais bar, or dine at its two-Michelin-starred Le Chantecler. Head past the reception into the Salon Versailles to spy Hyacinthe Rigaud's portrait of Louis XIV, one of three in the world. The original is in the Louvre; the other copy by Rigaud is at Versailles.

● Rue Défly is the **street to stroll along if you're looking for high-end galleries, ateliers and antiquaries.** And happily, it connects MAMAC with the chic pavement cafes of Place Garibaldi. Try Monsieur Edmond (at No. 2; ⑥) for vintage globes and carpets, Line Lischa (at No. 5; ⑦) for ceramics, and Librairie Rabelais (at No. 4; ⑧) for first-edition art books.

CHIC STREETS
The Musée Chagall is in Nice's ritziest area. After your visit, walk uphill to the Musée Matisse and check out the Norman mansions and Arabesque villas as you go

AL FRESCO VIBE
Outside, it's pavement cafe central. Grab an espresso or an ice cream and settle down for a spot of people-watching

Nice view: looking out over the city's Baie des Anges and the promenade; below, Calder sculpture at the Musée d'Art Moderne; Jacob's Dream at the Musée Chagall

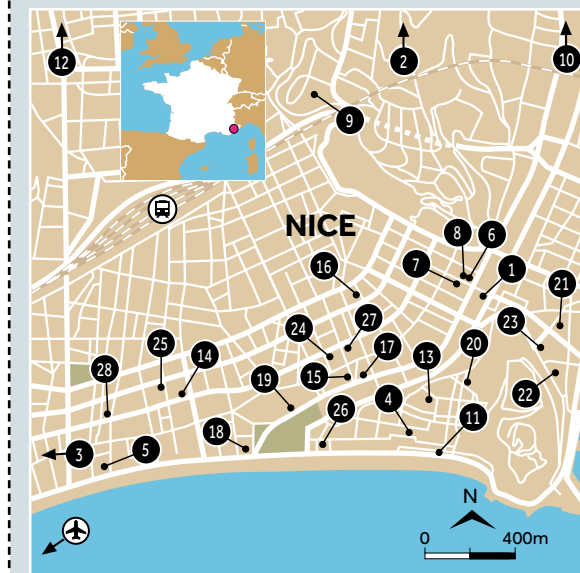
● Of the must-see art museums in Nice, Musée Chagall (musee-chagall.fr; £8.50; ⑨) is spellbinding in both individuality and scope. The first French national museum to be designed by the artist it represents, it was styled by Chagall to best present his ethereal works. The purpose-built space **focuses on his Message Biblique series, an angelic sea-blue dreamscape that fills the walls.**

● Les Abattoirs (50 Boulevard Jean-Baptiste Véra; ⑩) used to be just that. Now the **city's starkly capacious slaughterhouse hosts dozens of artist workshops,** plus an enviable exhibition schedule. Expect vast installations over its 2,000 square-metre main hall, with a focus on plastics, metals and urban sculpture.

● The Théâtre de la Photographie et de l'Image (1 Place Pierre Gautier; museephoto.com; ⑪) is the ne plus ultra of photography galleries. Recent retrospectives include Steve McCurry (of the green-eyed *Afghan Girl* fame) and Henri Cartier-Bresson (the street photographer who snapped romance and war in 20th-century France). Look out for the 19th-century shots from **Charles Nègre, who captured the washerwomen and street urchins of pre-tourism Nice.**

● **Hush-hush after-hours visits to major museums, night-time art walks and pop-up exhibitions** — that's how Botoxs, a contemporary art foundation, shakes up the city's art scene for in-the-know tourists. Its Facebook page details previews in offbeat galleries and inside artists' apartments. Many events take place at the seafront Galerie de la Marine (59 Quai des Etats-Unis; ⑫).

● The sprawling red mansion that is Villa Arson has represented the cutting edge of Nice's contemporary art scene since 1972. It's an art university alongside a thriving gallery space and magical gardens (20 Avenue Stephen Liégeois; villa-arson.org; ⑬). Check the **ongoing creations in metalwork, glass, woodcuts, digital art** and much else from its six international artists in residence. >



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EAT

● **Local specialities**
LUFRAN CALIN (Mains about £9)
Because: Chef Daniel Silvetti's local dishes include the likes of chickpea chips with pistou dip. **Travel's tip:** Silvetti recently submitted a dossier to Unesco to protect salade Niçoise and 90 other regional recipes. Ask and he'll point you to the 19 Cuisine Nissarde restaurants across town. 5 Rue Francis Gallo; 00 33 4 9380 8181; ⑩

● **Med with a Japanese twist**
L'ECOLE DE NICE (Mains all £15)
Because: Japanese chef Keisuke Matsushima won the Légion d'honneur for his painstaking interpretations of Niçois cuisine. **Travel's tip:** All main courses cost £15, so the £24 set dinner, with a wow-factor entrée and dessert, is great value. 16 Rue de la Buffa; 00 33 4 93813930, lecoledenice.com; ⑭

● **Gourmet bargain**
LUNA ROSSA (Mains about £21)
Because: In a rarefied salon adorned with graffiti canvases, expect modern Italo-Niçois cuisine such as creamy macaroni with white truffles. **Travel's tip:** Regular 20%-off deals appear online on sites such as thefork.com. 3 Rue Chauvain; 00 33 4 9385 5566; ⑮

● **Space-age fine dining**
FLAVEUR (Three courses from £79)
Because: The Tourteaux brothers, Gaël and Mickaël, scooped their restaurant's second Michelin star for artful dishes, such as Tobiko flying-fish eggs on a seaweed 'crisp'. **Travel's tip:** The menu is fixed, but don't worry. Go hungry and enjoy — you're in safe hands. 25 Rue Gubernatis; 00 33 4 9362 5395, restaurant-flaveur.com; ⑯

● **Two-Michelin-starred delight**
LE CHANTECLER (Four-course menu from £115)
Because: Virginie Basselot took over Le Chantecler earlier this year. Her avant-garde creations are wonderfully rich — try the Bresse chicken infused with girolles in a parsley mousseline. **Travel's tip:** You'll want to Instagram the wood-panelling — resist, as snapping on phones is frowned upon. And chaps will need to wear a tie. 37 Promenade des Anglais; 00 33 4 9316 6400, hotel-negresco-nice.com; ⑰

ROOFTOP BARS

● **Panoramic pours**
AQUA BAR
Because: Nothing shouts South of France like a bottle of wine in a rooftop locale. One of the best places to do it here is the amazing Aqua Bar, atop the Hotel Aston. **Travel's tip:** Its £4 slugs of pastis come with Niçois nibbles. There's a tiny plunge pool, too. 12 Ave Felix Faure; ⑰

● **Rosé-tinted views**
LA TERRASSE
Because: For more sip-in-the-sky action, take a lift from the first-floor lobby of Le Méridien up to La Terrasse. **Travel's tip:** Grab a bottle of Château Sainte Roseline, a superb Côtes de Provence rosé, and watch the jets glide into the airport. 1 Promenades des Anglais; ⑱

● **Red hot rooftop**
TERRASSE DU PLAZA
Because: The Terrasse du Plaza at the Boscolo Hotel serves smoked salmon wraps (£12) with Divines Restanques white wine (£5). **Travel's tip:** Go for the rooftop lunchtime special — two courses for £25. 12 Ave de Verdun; ⑲

ALFRESCO FILMS
 La Terrasse has its own rooftop cinema with deck chairs and wireless headphones. Recent showings included the Bardot classic *Et Dieu Créa la Femme*

ASK THE LOCAL
 Julie Thébaut works at the Oreva France travel agency

“ Rue Droite is where Niçois artists have their ateliers. Each is like an **interactive art gallery where you can meet the painter at work**. Sylvie T (14 Rue Droite; ⑳) creates **beautiful watercolours of the Old Town**. Modern-art lovers should head to Nice Port. This **super-cool area hosts street cafes and galleries**, including Patrick Fréga (3 Rue Martin Seytour; ㉑), who makes monumental sculptures. Try also Franck Michel (28 Rue Ségurane; ㉒), which **exhibits local artists, such as Arman, Ben, and Sacha Sosno**, who all have work on show at MAMAC. Best of all is the GCA Gallery, which specialises in street art (16 Rue Ségurane; ㉓).

WRITER'S FOODIE TIP
 Just up the road at No. 5 Rue Droite, you'll find Nice's kookiest, most authentic restaurant, *Chez Palmyre* (three courses for £15). It's a bargain!



STAY

● **Hip hostel**
VILLA ST EXUPERY BEACH (Doubles from £45, room-only)
Because: Each communal dorm and private double room is dedicated to a painter, with lashings of art on the walls. This award-winning hostel sits opposite the city-central department store Galeries Lafayette. **Travel's tip:** Take its free walking tour, which calls at the Bernar Venet sculpture on Promenade des Anglais, plus Matisse's ochre mansion on the Cours Saleya. 6 Rue Sacha Guitry; villahostels.com; ㉔

● **Living gallery**
HOTEL WINDSOR (Doubles from £59, room-only)
Because: For 16 years, hotel owner Odile Payen-Redolfi has allowed two artists each year to decorate a room. She now has 27 far-out bedrooms, including one set in pure gold by Claudio Parmiggiani. **Travel's tip:** The hotel doesn't advertise it, but head to the attic, which has a gym and an erudite mini-library. 11 Rue Dalpozzo; hotelwindsornice.com; ㉕

● **Matisse's seaside escape**
HOTEL BEAU RIVAGE (Doubles from £68, B&B)
Because: Henri Matisse checked in here at Christmas in 1917. These days, the Beau Rivage offers pillow menus plus lobby art from Niçois designer Stéphanie Marin. **Travel's tip:** Staying three nights or more? The Beau Rivage now rents sea-view apartments where Matisse painted and stayed, from £116 a night. 24 Rue Saint-François de Paule; hotelnicebeaurivage.com; ㉖

● **Arty bargain**
HOTEL SEIZE (Doubles from £75, B&B)
Because: The Seize has collaborated with a local art school to spice up its 34 rooms. Expect splashes of colour inspired by the likes of Roy Lichtenstein, plus local modern artist Ben. **Travel's tip:** Around the corner sit seven figurines on 10 metre-high pedestals by Spanish sculptor Jaume Plensa. Take a wander — at night each one glows a different colour. 16 Rue Chauvain; le-seize.nicehotels365.com; ㉗

● **Royal approval**
HOTEL NEGRESCO (Doubles from £178, room-only)
Because: The Queen, the Beatles and the Shah of Iran have all stayed here; the hotel has 117 art-splashed rooms. **Travel's tip:** Don't miss the 16,309-crystal Baccarat chandelier in the Royal Lounge. It was commissioned by Tsar Nicholas II, who was executed before he could take delivery. 37 Promenade des Anglais; hotel-negresco-nice.com; ㉘

● **Slice of the city**
NICE PEBBLES (Apartments for two from £240 a night, or £385 a week)
Because: Nice's premier holiday-letting agency manages 140 apartments from the boho Port to the Promenade and all are bookable from one night to one month. **Travel's tip:** If you're in a group, its higher-end properties make sense. Palais Lacourt, between the Negresco hotel and the Palais Masséna museum, sleeps six in luxury from £145pp a night. Palais Lacourt Apartment, Rue de Rivoli; nicepebbles.com; ㉙

GET ME THERE
GO INDEPENDENT
BA flies from four London airports plus Manchester to Nice from £56 return. **SNCF** (voyages-sncf.com) runs trains from London St Pancras to Nice, with a quick change in Paris, from £130 return; the journey takes 9hr 30min.

GO PACKAGED
 Escorted rail tour specialist **Great Rail Journeys** (greatrail.com) has a luxurious seven-day trip to Nice and the Côte d'Azur, including first-class trains from London St Pancras, from £1,535pp. Or **BA Holidays** (ba.com) has two nights in the Beau Rivage from £119pp, including return flights from Gatwick.

FURTHER INFORMATION
 The Nice Tourisme website (nice-tourisme.com) has excellent museum and gallery guides. It's worth getting the **Côte d'Azur Card** (cotedazur-card.com; £40 for three days) — it gives free access to more than 100 museums, activities and tours on the French Riviera, including the Chagall in Nice. ■

BEACH BARGAIN
 Beau Rivage Plage is one of Nice's hippest beach clubs. Hotel guests can bag a lounger and parasol for a discounted £18

Grand design: clockwise from top left, an apartment from Nice Pebbles; exterior of the Hotel Windsor; La Terrasse, the cool rooftop bar at Le Méridien hotel; fine dining at Le Chantecler; one of the artist-designed rooms at the Hotel Windsor

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, ROBERT HARDING. MAP: MAIDENHEAD CARTOGRAPHIC