



Introduction

Marseilles is a vibrant, bustling city. All the usual South of France attractions are apparent – the blue skies, the beaches with their turquoise waters and the picturesque fishing villages – but Marseilles seems to offer its visitors so much more, and by that we don't just mean *bouillabaisse* and *pastis*. The capital of Provence-Alps-Côte d'Azur region, Marseilles is the second-largest city in France, and enjoys a competitive rivalry with Paris. Its 810,000 residents are spread over 111 villages within the city limits, divided into 16 *arrondissements* (boroughs). Marseilles is the largest port in France, the eighth-largest in the world, and much like other buzzing seaside cities, it has an edgy, transient, all-things-are-possible feel. It's often been called the 'Gateway to the Orient', an indication of the exotic promise it suggests as much as a reference to its geographical location. The city's demographics are hugely varied, with over a third of the city ethnically Italian, a quarter French, a quarter North African and the third-largest Jewish community in Europe. Combine this variety with the boisterous students attending the University of Provence and the large number of people who come to live in the city because they've heard of its various pleasures, and the result is an active and expanding counter culture. Renowned artists like Cézanne, Braque and Renoir all painted in Marseilles at the turn of the century, but unlike the somewhat stagnant art scene on much of the French Riviera, Marseilles is currently experiencing a constant growth in the arts. The city's pop music and hip-hop scene is one of the foremost in France. Bold and defiant, Marseilles is the city that created the French national anthem *La Marseillaise*

during the country's Revolution. Marseilles is also the perfect location to use as a base to discover surrounding inland and coastal towns.



● Notre-Dame de la Garde protects fishermen and locals alike

Suggested itineraries

HALF-DAY: MARSEILLES IN A HURRY

Head down to the Vieux Port to check out the local fisherman hawking their morning catch on the quai des Belges (see page 70), then take in modern art at the Musée Cantini or urban fashion at the Musée de la Mode, both within easy walking distance



Any itinerary allows time to savour an authentic bouillabaisse

(see page 83). Finish with the city's most famous dish, *bouillabaisse*, at the Miramar (see page 74).

1 DAY: TIME TO SEE A LITTLE MORE

If you have the rest of the day free, work off that massive lunch with a hike (or take the Petit-Train) up to the Notre-Dame de la Garde (see page 95) for incredible views over the city. In the evening, head to La Caravelle (see page 73) in the Hotel Bellevue, and enjoy a *pastis* on their tiny balcony. Hit the cours Julien area for dinner and a taste of local nightlife.

2-3 DAYS: TIME TO SEE MUCH MORE

If the weather is fine, take one of the frequent ferries to the Château d'If (see page 64), or spend a lazy afternoon on Les Catalans beach or the Prado seafront (see page 91). The following day, head in the other direction, wandering through the Panier district (see page 60) for an eventual exploration of the Joliette Docks (see page 66).

LONGER: ENJOYING MARSEILLES TO THE FULL

With a chunk of time at your disposal, be sure to visit the Port l'Estaque fishing harbour, where Cézanne, Braque and other artists painted (see page 22). Alternatively, head to the Vieux Port and take a boat tour of the Calanques, or hop on the train for a day trip to Cassis (see page 104) or Aix-en-Provence (see page 116).

Clos Sainte-Madeline are popular, as are those from the Domaine des Quatre Vents, particularly the rosés.

CULTURE

Fondation Camargo

Formerly the Hotel Panorama, in 1967 this was purchased by American artist Jerome Hill, and he commenced his residency programme for artists, composers and scholars here. Concerts and lectures, often in English, are held frequently, as is the annual Printemps du Livre. [a](#) av. de l'Amiral Ganteaume [t](#) 04 42 01 11 57 [w](#) www.camargofoundation.org, www.printempsdulivre-cassis.org

Musée Méditerranéen d'Art et Traditions Populaires

For a dose of Provençal artworks and artefacts, head to this little museum, housed in a renovated 17th-century presbytery. [a](#) rue Xavier d'Authier [t](#) 04 42 01 88 66 [l](#) 10.30–12.30, 15.30–18.30 Wed–Sat



[a](#) Cassis' brightly coloured townhouses

RETAIL THERAPY

L'Art du Temps Linger over the eclectic choice of painted ceramics, antique restored furniture and Provençal paintings. [a](#) 10 rue Pierre-Eydin [t](#) 04 42 01 88 55 [l](#) 10.00–19.30 Mon–Sat

Maison des Vins If you've fallen in love with the local wines, head to this speciality store to pick up a few bottles. Staying in a self-catering apartment? Pop next door to the Maison des Coquillages for some seafood to have along with your wine. [a](#) route de Marseilles [t](#) 04 42 01 15 61 [w](#) www.maisondesvinscassis.com

Quai des Artistes Here you can pick up local arts and crafts, as well as quirky flowers. [a](#) quai Calendal [l](#) 19.00–24.00 July & Aug

TAKING A BREAK

Sucr'E delices £ Here you'll find gourmet pastries with a touch of imagination. Traditional sweet cakes and biscuits are often flavoured with a blend of fruits, herbs and vegetables. [a](#) 4 rue Alexandre Gervais [t](#) 04 42 03 59 79

Le Chai Cassidain £–££ Pop into this specialist wine bar for a taste of the best local produce. [a](#) 6 rue Séverin Icard [t](#) 04 42 01 99 80 [w](#) www.lechacassidain.com [l](#) 10.00–22.30 Mon–Sat, closed Sun

AFTER DARK

L'Oustau de la Mar £ Nestled among the restaurants that line the port, L'Oustau de la Mar serves up spectacular seafood and excellent-value three-course menus (€22.50), as well as daily specials like filet of sole doused in a raspberry butter. [a](#) 20 quai