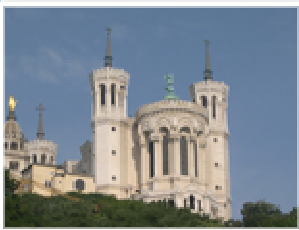


LYON

Lyon is a city in east-central **France** in the region **Rhône-Alpes**. Lyon is the second-largest French urban area, the first being Paris and the third Marseille. It is a major center of business, and has a reputation as the French capital of gastronomy and having a significant role in the history of cinema with Auguste and Louis Lumière. Lyon is also a major industrial center specializing in chemical, pharmaceutical, and biotech industries. There is also a significant software industry with a particular focus on video games.

Lyon is the préfecture (capital) of the Rhône département, and also the capital of the Rhône-Alpes région. The city is known for its historical and architectural landmarks and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Lyon was historically known as the silk capital of the world.



The Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière is a minor basilica in **Lyon**. It was built with private funds between 1872 and 1896 in a dominating position in the city, as a mark of the triumph of Christian values over the socialists of the Lyon commune of 1870, like the similarly-inspired **Basilique du Sacré-Cœur**, Paris. Its design, by Pierre Bossan, draws from both Romanesque and Byzantine architecture, two non-Gothic models that were unusual choices at the time. It features fine mosaics, superb stained glass, and a crypt of Saint Joseph. The basilica, which offers guided tours and contains a Museum of Sacred Art, receives 1.5 million visitors annually.

Lyon Cathedral (Cathédrale Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Lyon) is a roman catholic cathedral, the seat of the Archbishop of Lyon. It was founded by Saint Pothinus and Saint Irenaeus, the first two bishops of Lyon. The cathedral is also known as "Primatiale" because in 1079 the Pope granted to the archbishop of Lyon the title of Primate of All the Gauls with the legal supremacy over the principal archbishops of the kingdom. Begun in the twelfth century on the ruins of a 6th century church, it was completed in 1476. The building is 80 metres long (internally), 20 metres wide at the choir, and 32.5 metres high in the nave. The cathedral also has an astronomical clock from the 14th century.

The Musée des beaux-arts de Lyon is a municipal museum of fine arts. It is housed near **place des Terreaux** in a former Benedictine convent. Its collections range from ancient Egypt to the modern period form one of the most important European museums.

The Place Bellecour is a large town square in **Lyon**, to the north of the Ainay district. Measuring 312 m by 200 m (62,000 m²), it is the largest clear square (i.e., without any

patches of greenery, trees or any other kind of obstacles) in Europe, and the third biggest square of France, behind the place des Quinconces in **Bordeaux** (126,000 m²) et the place de la Concorde in **Paris** (86,400 m²). It is also the largest pedestrian square of Europe, the places mentioned above can accommodate vehicles, as opposed to the Place Bellecour. In the middle is a statue of king Louis XIV mounted on a horse. Two pavilions are also on the square. The first houses the tourist information office of Lyon, the second an art gallery.



Place des Terreaux. This large square was completely redesigned in the 1990s by the artist Daniel Buren. On the East side stands the City Hall. On the North side, you will find the fountain sculpted by Bartholdi, the 'father' of the Statue of Liberty; this fountain was moved from the West side when the square was renovated. It now faces **Palais St Pierre**, which hosts the Museum of Fine Arts.

The Bouchons. The traditional restaurants in **Lyon** are called bouchons; the origin of the word is unclear (it literally means "cork"). Eating in a good bouchon is certainly a must-do. They serve the typical local dishes.

Parc de la Tête d'Or (literally, Golden Head Park), in central **Lyon**, is the largest urban park in **France** at 117 hectares. Located in the 6th arrondissement, it features a large lake on which boating takes place during the summer months. Due to the relatively small number of other parks in Lyon, it receives a huge number of visitors over summer, and is a frequent destination for joggers and cyclists. At the northern end of the park, there is a small zoo, with giraffes, elephants, tigers and other animals. There is also sporting equipment, such as a velodrome, boules court, mini-golf, horse riding, and even a miniature train.

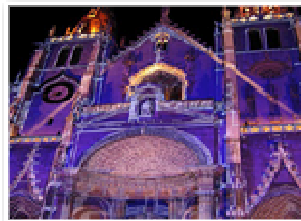
Rue St Jean. This cobblestoned pedestrian street is the main axis of the area. It is full of souvenir shops and restaurants mainly intended for tourists. On a sunny Sunday afternoon, it may be hard to walk because of the crowd of both locals and tourists. You can also check out the more quiet **Rue des Trois Maries** which runs parallel to Rue St Jean, between **Place de la Baleine** and **Rue du Palais de Justice**.

The Old Lyon, is the largest Renaissance area in **Europe**. Its current organization, with narrow streets mainly parallel to the river **Saône**, dates back to the Middle Ages. The buildings were erected between the 15th and the 17th centuries, notably by wealthy Italian, Flemish and German merchants who settled in Lyon where 4 fairs were held each year. At that time, the buildings of Lyon were said to be the highest in Europe. The area was entirely refurbished in the 1980s and 1990s. It now offers the visitor colorful, narrow cobblestoned streets.

Montée de la Grande Côte. This steep street has Renaissance buildings and offers a very beautiful view over the city from its top.

EVENTS

- The Festival of Lights (Fête des Lumières) is by far the most important event of the year. It lasts four days around the 8th of December.
- The Nuits de Fourvière festival: From June to early August, the Roman theatres host various shows such as concerts (popular music, jazz, classical), dancing, theatre and cinema.
- The Biennals: Lyon alternatively hosts a dancing (even years) and a contemporary art (odd years) biennals from September to December/January.



INFORMATION

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