

MARSEILLE

Marseille is the second-largest city of **France**. It forms the third-largest metropolitan area, after those of Paris and Lyon. Located on the Mediterranean, Marseille is France's largest commercial port. Marseille is the administrative capital (préfecture de région) of the **Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur** region, as well as the administrative capital (préfecture départementale) of the Bouches-du-Rhône department. Its inhabitants are called Marseillais.

From colourful markets (like **Noailles market**) that will make you feel like you are in Africa, to the **Calanques** (a natural area of big cliffs falling into the sea - Calanque means fjord), from the **Panier** area (the oldest place of the town and historically the place where newcomers installed) to the Vieux-Port (old harbor) and the Corniche (a road along the sea) Marseille has definitely a lot to offer.



The Old Port or Vieux-Port, the main harbour and marina of the city. It is guarded by two massive forts (**Fort St Nicolas** and **Fort Saint Jean**) and is one of the main places to eat in the city. Dozens of cafés line the waterfront. The **Quai des Belges** at the end of the harbour is the site of the daily fish market. Much of the northern quayside area was rebuilt by the architect Fernand Pouillon after its destruction by the Nazis in 1943.

The Phare de Sainte Marie, a lighthouse on the inlet to the Old Port.

La Vieille Charité in the Panier, an architecturally significant building designed by the Puget brothers. The central baroque chapel is situated in a courtyard lined with arcaded galleries. Originally built as an alms house, it is now home to an archeological museum and a gallery of African and Asian art, as well as bookshops and a café.

The Abbey of Saint-Victor, one of the oldest places of Christian worship in **France**. Its early fifth century crypt and catacombs occupy the site of a Hellenic burial ground, later used for Christian martyrs and venerated ever since. Continuing a medieval tradition, every year at Candlemas a Black Madonna from the crypt is carried in procession along rue Sainte for a blessing from the archbishop, followed by a mass and the distribution of "navettes" and green votive candles.



The Cathedral of Sainte-Marie-Majeure or la Major, founded in the 4th century, enlarged in the 11th century and completely rebuilt in the second half of the 19th century by the architects Léon Vaudoyer and Jacques Henri Esperandieu. The present day cathedral is a gigantic edifice in the Romano-Byzantine style. A romanesque transept, choir and altar survive from the older medieval cathedral, spared from complete destruction only as a result of public protests at the time.



The Basilica of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, built by the architect Esperandieu, is an enormous Romano-Byzantine basilica in the hills to the south of the **Old Port**. The terrace offers spectacular panoramic views of Marseille and its surroundings.

The Unité d'Habitation, an influential experimental building designed by the Swiss architect Le Corbusier in the late forties.

The Parc Borély, a park off the Bay of **Marseille** with the Jardin botanique E.M. Heckel, a botanical garden.

The Pharo Gardens, a park with views of the **Mediterranean** and the Old Port.

The Corniche, a picturesque waterfront road between the Old Port and the Bay of Marseille.

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- The calanques, a wild mountainous coastal area of outstanding natural beauty.
- The islands of the Frioul archipelago in the Bay of Marseille, accessible by ferry from the Old Port. The prison of Château d'If was the setting for the Count of Monte Cristo, the novel by Alexandre Dumas.

INFORMATION

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