Travel Itinerary: Nice to Menton

Introduction

The journey from Nice to Menton along the French Riviera—often called the **Côte d'Azur**—is one of the world's most spectacular coastal routes. This 30-kilometer stretch encompasses dramatic coastal scenery, medieval villages perched on cliffsides, Belle Époque architecture, and the unique microclimate that has made this region a haven for citrus cultivation and winter tourism since the 19th century.

Menton itself, nestled against the Italian border, represents the culmination of this journey—a town that embodies the transition between French and Italian cultures, blessed with exceptional gardens, historic architecture, and a slower pace that contrasts with Nice's urban energy.

This itinerary can be completed in a single day, but we recommend 2-3 days to truly appreciate each stop along the way and Menton's many attractions.

Best Time to Visit: While the Côte d'Azur enjoys mild weather year-round, the ideal times are:

- **February-March:** Menton's famous Lemon Festival (**Fête du Citron**)
- **April-June:** Perfect weather, blooming gardens, fewer crowds
- **September-October:** Still warm, harvest season, cultural events
- **Avoid:** July-August can be very crowded and expensive</note>

===== Overview of the Route =====

Distance: Approximately 30 kilometers (19 miles) from Nice to Menton

Travel Options:



- **By Train:** Frequent TER trains (20-30 minutes, €5-8)
- **By Bus:** Line 100 follows the coastal road (Basse Corniche), spectacular views (45-75 minutes, €1.50)
- **By Car:** Multiple routes available (see below)
- **By Bicycle:** Challenging but rewarding for experienced cyclists

The Three Corniches:

The route offers three parallel roads at different elevations, each offering unique experiences:

Basse Corniche (Lower Corniche / N98): Coastal road passing through all major towns—Villefranche-sur-Mer, Beaulieu-sur-Mer, Èze-bord-de-Mer, Cap-d'Ail, Monaco, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. Most scenic but slowest due to traffic.

Moyenne Corniche (Middle Corniche / N7): Mid-level road offering dramatic views without coastal congestion. Passes through Èze Village (highly recommended stop).

Grande Corniche (High Corniche / D2564): Highest road, following the ancient Roman **Via Julia Augusta**. Most dramatic views, fewer stops. Passes La Turbie.



Recommended Strategy: Take the **Basse Corniche** (coastal road) or bus Line 100 from Nice to Menton, stopping at key points. Return via **Moyenne Corniche** to visit Èze Village, or take the **Grande Corniche** for spectacular sunset views. This combination provides the best overall experience.

===== Detailed Itinerary =====

==== Day 1: Nice to Villefranche-sur-Mer to Menton ====

=== Departure from Nice (Morning) ===

Starting Point: Nice-Ville train station or bus stops along Promenade des Anglais

Breakfast Recommendation (Nice):

- **La Petite Maison:** Elegant breakfast in Old Nice (expensive but exceptional)
- **Café de Turin:** Famous for oysters but also serves excellent breakfast
- **Boulangerie Espuno:** Traditional bakery with excellent pastries and coffee

=== Stop 1: Villefranche-sur-Mer (30 minutes - 1 hour) ===



Distance from Nice: 6 km (15 minutes by bus/train)

Villefranche-sur-Mer is a picturesque fishing village with one of the deepest natural harbors in the Mediterranean. The perfectly preserved medieval old town cascades down to a beautiful sandy beach.

What to See:

- **Vieille Ville (Old Town):** Wander the narrow streets and covered passageways (**rue Obscure**)
- **Chapelle Saint-Pierre:** Chapel decorated by Jean Cocteau in 1957 with frescoes depicting the life of Saint Peter
- **Citadelle Saint-Elme:** 16th-century fortress housing several museums
- **Beach:** One of the region's best beaches for swimming

Quick Refreshment:

- **La Mère Germaine:** Historic restaurant on the harbor (expensive but famous)
- **Le Cosmo:** Casual harbor-side café with reasonable prices



Parking Note: If driving, parking is very difficult in summer. Use the paid parking lot above the town or consider taking the bus/train for this leg.

=== Stop 2: Beaulieu-sur-Mer (30 minutes - 1 hour) ===

Distance from Villefranche: 3 km

Beaulieu-sur-Mer ("Beautiful Place on Sea") lives up to its name, with Belle Époque villas and a sheltered microclimate creating a subtropical atmosphere.

What to See:

- **Villa Kérylos:** Extraordinary reconstruction of an ancient Greek villa, built 1902-1908 by archaeologist Théodore Reinach. UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Allow 1 hour, €13 entry)
- **Port de Plaisance:** Pleasant harbor walk
- **Casino:** Belle Époque architecture

Continue to Menton: From Beaulieu, continue via bus Line 100 or train. The coastal road becomes increasingly dramatic.

=== Optional Detour: Èze Village (1-2 hours) ===

Access: From Beaulieu or later stops, take bus 83 or drive up the Moyenne Corniche

Èze is a spectacular medieval village perched 427 meters (1,400 feet) above sea level. While technically not on the direct coastal route, it's worth the detour.[1)]

What to See:



- **Village Médiéval:** Perfectly preserved medieval village with artisan shops
- **Jardin Exotique:** Exotic garden at the summit with panoramic views (€6 entry)
- **Parfumerie Fragonard:** Historic perfume factory with free tours

Dining:

- **Château Eza:** Michelin-starred restaurant with spectacular views (very expensive, reserve ahead)
- **La Chèvre d'Or:** Another high-end option with exceptional setting
- **Numerous cafés:** More casual options throughout the village



Tourist Alert: Èze Village is extremely popular and can be overwhelmed by cruise ship tourists mid-day. Visit early morning or late afternoon for a better experience.

=== Passing Through: Monaco/Monte Carlo (Optional Stop: 2-4 hours) ===

Distance from Beaulieu: 7 km

While Monaco deserves its own itinerary, if time permits, consider a brief stop:

Quick Highlights:

- **Casino de Monte-Carlo:** Iconic Belle Époque casino (€17 entry to gaming rooms, free to walk around outside)
- **Port Hercules:** Yacht-watching
- **Le Rocher (Monaco-Ville):** Old town with Prince's Palace and Cathedral

- **Jardin Exotique:** Dramatic cliffside succulent garden

Note: Monaco is independent of France—a sovereign principality—though customs integration means no border controls.[2)]

=== Stop 3: Roquebrune-Cap-Martin (30-45 minutes) ===

Distance from Monaco: 4 km

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin consists of the medieval village of Roquebrune perched on the hillside and the peninsula of Cap-Martin below.

What to See:

- **Château de Roquebrune:** Medieval castle, one of the oldest in France (10th century), with spectacular views (€6 entry)
- **Vieux Village:** Charming medieval streets and passageways
- **Cap-Martin:** Coastal walking path with architectural landmarks

Cultural Note: Roquebrune has significant artistic connections. Le Corbusier drowned while swimming off Cap-Martin in 1965 and is buried in Roquebrune cemetery. His **Cabanon** (tiny beach cabin) can be visited by appointment.[3)]

Continue to Menton: The final 5 km to Menton offers beautiful coastal views.

=== Arrival in Menton (Late Afternoon) ===



Arrive in Menton in the late afternoon, allowing time to check into accommodation, explore the old town, and enjoy dinner.

==== Day 2: Exploring Menton ====

===== History of Menton =====

==== Ancient and Medieval Origins ====

The area around Menton has been inhabited since prehistoric times, with evidence of Paleolithic settlements in nearby caves. The Romans established settlements along the coast, and the Via Julia Augusta passed through the region, connecting Italy to Spain.[4)]

During the medieval period, Menton was part of the territory controlled by the Ventimiglia family, Italian nobles with domains on both sides of what is now the French-Italian border. In 1346, Menton came under the protection of the Grimaldi family of Monaco, beginning a 500-year association with the Principality.[5)]



Name Origins: The name “Menton” may derive from the Latin “Mons Ottonis” (Mount Otto) or possibly from “mentum” (chin), referring to the promontory on which the old town sits. The Italian name is “Mentone.”

==== Monaco Period (1346-1848) ====

For five centuries, Menton was part of Monaco's territory, though the relationship was often contentious. The people of Menton chafed under Monégasque rule and heavy taxation, particularly the lemon tax that Monaco imposed on Menton's primary export.

The Grimaldi princes were often absent rulers, focused on Monaco itself, leaving Menton somewhat neglected but also relatively autonomous. During this period, Menton developed its distinctive character—more Italian than French, with strong commercial ties to Genoa and the Italian Riviera.[6)]

==== The Free Cities Period (1848-1861) ====

In 1848, revolution swept through Europe. Menton and neighboring Roquebrune declared themselves “Free Cities” under Sardinian protection, breaking away from Monaco. This short-lived independence reflected the Italian unification movement (**Risorgimento**) sweeping the region.[7)]

The Free Cities period was prosperous. Menton developed as a winter health resort, attracting northern European visitors seeking the mild climate. English, Russian, and German visitors built villas and established a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

==== French Period (1861-Present) ====

In 1861, following complex negotiations related to Italian unification and French territorial ambitions, Menton and Roquebrune voted by plebiscite to join France. The vote was overwhelming: 833 for France, 54 against. Monaco received financial compensation of 4 million francs.[8)]



The annexation to France accelerated Menton's development as a resort town. The **Belle Époque** (1871-1914) was Menton's golden age. Grand hotels, casinos, villas, and gardens were constructed to accommodate wealthy winter visitors, particularly British aristocrats fleeing cold northern winters.

The physician Dr. James Henry Bennet published influential works promoting Menton's climate as ideal for treating tuberculosis and respiratory ailments, making the town a major health resort.[9)] Distinguished visitors included Queen Victoria, Empress Eugénie, and countless aristocrats, artists, and intellectuals.



The Tubercular Era: In the 19th century, Menton was known as a sanatorium town where the wealthy came to convalesce from tuberculosis. The mild climate, abundant sunshine, and clean air were believed therapeutic. This medical tourism built Menton's economy and reputation, though it also gave the town a melancholic association with illness and death.

==== 20th Century to Present ====

World War I marked the end of the Belle Époque. The interwar period saw Menton continue as a resort, though with diminished grandeur. World War II brought German occupation and significant damage, particularly to the Italian border area.

Post-war reconstruction preserved much of Menton's historic character. The town

reinvented itself through cultural events, most notably the **Fête du Citron** (Lemon Festival) initiated in 1934 and revived after the war. This annual February event celebrates Menton's citrus-growing heritage with spectacular displays made from lemons and oranges.[10)]

Today, Menton retains its Belle Époque charm while serving as a quieter alternative to Nice and Monaco. The town has invested heavily in gardens and cultural attractions, marketing itself as the “Pearl of France” and “City of Gardens.”

===== Cultural Significance and Notable Figures =====

==== Jean Cocteau in Menton ====

The poet, playwright, and artist **Jean Cocteau** (1889-1963) had a profound connection with Menton. In 1957, he decorated the Salle des Mariages (Marriage Hall) in Menton's town hall with surrealist frescoes depicting love and marriage. This room remains one of Cocteau's most important artistic legacies.[11)]

The **Musée Jean Cocteau** collection Séverin Wunderman, housed in a modern building on the waterfront, contains the world's largest collection of Cocteau's works. A second Cocteau museum occupies the 17th-century Bastion fortress.

==== William Webb Ellis ====



William Webb Ellis, credited with inventing rugby football, died in Menton in 1872 and is buried in the old cemetery. The Rugby World Cup trophy is named the Webb Ellis Cup in his honor.

==== Katherine Mansfield ====

The New Zealand modernist writer Katherine Mansfield spent several periods in Menton seeking treatment for tuberculosis. The town's atmosphere influenced her later stories.[12)]

==== Vicente Blasco Ibáñez ====

The Spanish novelist spent his final years in Menton and died there in 1928. He is buried in the Trabuquet cemetery overlooking the sea.

==== Citrus Heritage ====

Menton's unique microclimate—protected by mountains and benefiting from exceptional sunshine—allows cultivation of citrus fruits, particularly lemons. Menton lemons have **IGP** (Protected Geographical Indication) status, recognized for their distinctive sweet flavor, thick skin, and aromatic oils.[13)]

The **Fête du Citron**, held annually in February, transforms the town into a citrus wonderland with elaborate sculptures made from over 140 tons of lemons and oranges. This event attracts over 200,000 visitors during the three-week festival.

===== What to See and Do in Menton =====

==== Old Town (Vieille Ville) ====

Parvis Saint-Michel: The centerpiece of the old town, this beautiful square features two churches and offers panoramic coastal views. The colorful paving creates a distinctive pattern.

Basilique Saint-Michel-Archange: Baroque church (1619-1653) with an elaborate façade and interior. The bell tower is the tallest in the region at 53 meters. The square hosts summer concerts.

Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs: Adjacent to the basilica, this chapel hosts classical music concerts.

Rue Longue: The old town's main street, actually following the ancient Roman Via Julia Augusta route. Narrow medieval streets branch off on either side.

Cemetery (Vieux Château): On the hilltop site of the former castle, this cemetery offers spectacular views and contains the graves of many notable figures. The cemetery's artistic tombs and dramatic setting make it worth visiting.

Jean Cocteau Sites:

- **Salle des Mariages** (Town Hall): Cocteau's decorated marriage hall (€2 entry, guided visits)
- **Bastion:** Small Cocteau museum in waterfront fortress (€4 entry)
- **Musée Jean Cocteau collection Séverin Wunderman:** Modern museum (€10 entry)





Old Town Navigation: The old town is car-free and steep. Wear comfortable walking shoes. The climb to the cemetery and hilltop is strenuous but rewarding. Go early morning or late afternoon to avoid heat and crowds.

==== Gardens ====

Menton's exceptional microclimate supports spectacular gardens—a major draw for visitors.

Jardin Serre de la Madone: Created by American botanist Lawrence Johnston (who also created Hidcote Manor in England). Mediterranean and exotic plants in a romantic setting. (€8 entry, closed Mondays)[14)]

Jardin Botanique Exotique Val Rahmeh: Tropical botanical garden managed by the National Museum of Natural History. Features 1,700 species including tropical fruits, spices, and rare plants. (€8 entry)

Jardin Maria Serena: Villa garden with palm collection and Mediterranean plantings. (€10 entry, limited opening hours)

Jardin des Colombières: Historic garden with exceptional views and rare plants. (€8 entry, appointment required)

Jardin de la Villa Fontana Rosa: Created by Spanish novelist Vicente Blasco Ibáñez,

featuring colorful ceramic decorations. (Free entry, limited hours)

Jardin Public Biovès: The central gardens where the Lemon Festival displays are created. Pleasant year-round.



Garden Tip: Consider purchasing a combined ticket (**Pass Jardins**) covering multiple gardens at reduced price. Available at tourist office (€20 for 3 gardens). Gardens typically close Monday/Tuesday and have limited winter hours. Check opening times before visiting.

==== Beaches and Promenade ====

Promenade du Soleil: The main seafront promenade stretching along Menton's beaches. Pleasant for strolling with mountain and sea views.

Beaches: Menton has both public beaches (mostly pebble) and private beach clubs (**plages privées**) offering loungers, umbrellas, and restaurant service. The Garavan area east of the old town has the nicest beaches.

==== Markets ====

Covered Market (Les Halles): Daily morning market (except Monday) selling local produce, including Menton lemons, flowers, cheese, and regional specialties. The market building itself is beautiful Belle Époque architecture.



Brocante/Antiques Market: Friday mornings in Place aux Herbes (old town)

==== Museums ====

Musée Jean Cocteau collection Séverin Wunderman: World's largest Cocteau collection in striking modern building (€10)

Musée de Préhistoire Régionale: Regional prehistoric museum near the Italian border (€5)

Palais de l'Europe: Art gallery hosting temporary exhibitions (free or modest entry)

==== Day Trips from Menton ====

Sospel: Medieval village 20km inland with impressive bridge and fortifications (30 minutes by train or car)

Sainte-Agnès: One of France's highest coastal villages (800m elevation) with spectacular views (15km, requires car or taxi)

Italian Border Towns: Ventimiglia (3km), Bordighera, San Remo—all easily accessible by train



Border Crossing: The French-Italian border is completely open (Schengen Agreement). You can walk or drive across without formalities. Italian towns offer excellent markets, particularly

Ventimiglia's Friday market.

===== Where to Stay =====

==== Luxury Hotels ====

Hôtel Napoléon

- Category: 4-star
- Location: Promenade du Soleil (waterfront)
- Features: Belle Époque building, sea-view rooms, pool, restaurant
- Price Range: €180-400/night
- Why Choose: Central location, classic elegance, professional service
- Website: napoleon-menton.com

Hôtel Riva

- Category: 4-star boutique
- Location: Promenade du Soleil
- Features: Modern design, small pool, contemporary art, excellent breakfast
- Price Range: €150-350/night
- Why Choose: Modern aesthetic, design-conscious, good value for quality
- Website: hotel-riva.com

Claridge's Hotel & Spa

- Category: 4-star
- Location: Near town center
- Features: Spa, wellness center, renovated Belle Époque building
- Price Range: €120-280/night
- Why Choose: Spa facilities, good value, convenient location

==== Mid-Range Hotels ====

Hôtel Princesse et Richmond

- Category: 3-star
- Location: Promenade du Soleil
- Features: Traditional hotel, some sea-view rooms, family-run
- Price Range: €90-180/night
- Why Choose: Good value, central location, traditional hospitality

Paris Rome

- Category: 3-star
- Location: Near station and old town
- Features: Belle Époque building, recently renovated
- Price Range: €80-150/night
- Why Choose: Excellent value, convenient location, traditional charm

Hôtel Chambord

- Category: 3-star
- Location: Town center
- Features: Family-run, pleasant rooms, personal service
- Price Range: €70-140/night
- Why Choose: Personal attention, good breakfast, quiet location

==== Budget Options ====

Hotel Belgique

- Category: 2-star
- Location: Near station
- Features: Simple rooms, friendly management
- Price Range: €60-100/night
- Why Choose: Budget-friendly, clean, convenient for transport

Auberge de Jeunesse (Youth Hostel)

- Location: Plateau Saint-Michel (hills above town)
- Features: Dormitory and private rooms, common kitchen, views
- Price Range: €25-60/night
- Why Choose: Budget option, social atmosphere, scenic location
- Note: Requires uphill walk or bus ride

==== Vacation Rentals ====



Menton has numerous vacation rental apartments and villas available through:

- Airbnb: Wide selection in all price ranges
- Abritel/HomeAway: French vacation rental platform
- Local agencies: Various agencies specialize in Menton rentals



Accommodation Strategy: Book well in advance for:

- **Lemon Festival** (February): Town completely full, premium prices
- **Summer months** (July-August): Peak season
- **September-October:** Shoulder season offers good value and weather

Consider staying in old town for atmosphere (but stairs and parking challenges) or waterfront for convenience.

===== Where to Eat =====

==== Fine Dining ====

Mirazur ★★★

- Cuisine: Contemporary, Mediterranean
- Chef: Mauro Colagreco

- Location: 30 Avenue Aristide Briand (near Italian border)
- Price: €€€€ (€130-300 per person)
- Notes: Three Michelin stars, ranked #1 in World's 50 Best Restaurants (2019). Reservations essential months in advance. Spectacular terrace overlooking sea.[15)]
- Reservation: mirazur.fr



Mirazur Reservation: This is one of the world's most sought-after restaurant reservations. Book 2-3 months ahead through their website. Dress code is smart casual. Lunch is slightly less expensive than dinner and offers equally excellent food.

Le Bistrot des Jardins

- Cuisine: Contemporary French
- Location: 14 Avenue Boyer
- Price: €€€ (€60-100 per person)
- Notes: Elegant setting, creative cuisine, beautiful presentation
- Reservation recommended

==== Traditional/Local Cuisine ====

La Cantinetta



- Cuisine: Italian/Mentonnais
- Location: 9 Rue Trenca (old town)
- Price: €€ (€30-50 per person)
- Notes: Authentic local cooking, pasta, fresh fish, intimate atmosphere
- Closed: Monday

Restaurant du Bastion

- Cuisine: Mediterranean
- Location: Next to Cocteau museum on waterfront
- Price: €€ (€25-45 per person)
- Notes: Lovely terrace, fresh seafood, good value

Le Nautic

- Cuisine: Seafood
- Location: 27 Quai de Monléon (port)
- Price: €€ (€30-55 per person)
- Notes: Harbor location, fresh fish daily, bouillabaisse on request

A Brajade Méridionale

- Cuisine: Traditional Mentonnaise
- Location: 66 Rue Longue (old town)
- Price: €€ (€25-40 per person)
- Notes: Local specialties including socca, pissaladière, farcis niçois
- Very casual, authentic

==== Casual Dining ====

L'Ulivo

- Cuisine: Italian
- Location: 6 Rue Trenca
- Price: € (€15-30 per person)
- Notes: Excellent pizza, pasta, friendly service, no reservations

Côté Sud

- Cuisine: Mediterranean
- Location: Promenade du Soleil
- Price: € (€15-28 per person)
- Notes: Good salads, grilled fish, people-watching location

Chez Mireille - L'Ermitage

- Cuisine: Traditional French
- Location: Route de Sospel (outside town center)
- Price: €€ (€25-40 per person)
- Notes: Local favorite, generous portions, family atmosphere

==== Cafés and Light Meals ====



Boulangerie Reine

- Location: Multiple locations
- Specialty: Excellent bakery, famous for their focaccia
- Price: € (€5-12)

Pâtisserie Mestre

- Location: 18 Rue Partouneaux
- Specialty: Traditional pastries, tarte au citron de Menton
- Price: € (€3-8)

Gelateria Glacier La Paillotte

- Location: Port
- Specialty: Artisanal ice cream, Menton lemon flavor
- Price: € (€3-6)

Café Le Golfe

- Location: Promenade du Soleil
- Notes: Classic café, good for breakfast or aperitif
- Price: € (€8-15)



Local Specialties to Try:

- **Tarte au Citron de Menton:** Lemon tart made with local lemons

- **Socca:** Chickpea flour pancake (Niçois specialty)
- **Pissaladière:** Onion, anchovy, and olive tart
- **Barbajuan:** Fried ravioli filled with Swiss chard and ricotta
- **Fougasse Mentonnaise:** Local version of Italian focaccia
- **Citron pressé:** Fresh-squeezed lemon juice with water and sugar</note>

===== Practical Information =====

==== Getting There ====

From Nice Airport:

- Train: Take bus line 110 or 210 to Nice-Ville station, then TER train to Menton (total 1.5-2 hours, €10-15)
- Direct Bus: Line 110 express to Menton (90 minutes, €11)
- Taxi: Direct to Menton (45-60 minutes, €90-120)
- Private Transfer: Pre-booked services available (€80-100)

From Nice:

- Train: TER trains every 30 minutes (20-30 minutes, €5-8)
- Bus: Line 100 along coastal road (60-90 minutes, €1.50)—very scenic but slow
- Car: 30km via Basse Corniche (45-75 minutes depending on traffic)




==== Getting Around Menton ====

Walking: Old town and central areas are walkable. Hilly terrain requires fitness.

Local Buses:

- Lines 2, 3, 6, 7 serve different neighborhoods
- €1 per ride or €5 for 10-ride pass
- Free for children under 5

Bicycle: Bike rental available but hilly terrain challenging

Taxi: Available at station and main squares, or call in advance

Parking:

- Street parking difficult in center
- Use paid parking lots: Parking du Port, Parking des Halles
- Hotel parking often available (€10-20/day)

==== Tourist Information ====

Office de Tourisme Menton

- Location: 8 Avenue Boyer (main office) and Palais de l'Europe
- Website: tourisme-menton.fr

- Services: Maps, accommodation assistance, event information, guided tours

==== Best Times to Visit ====

February-March: Lemon Festival (very crowded but spectacular)

April-May: Perfect weather, gardens in bloom, fewer crowds

June: Good weather, cultural events, before peak season

July-August: Peak season—crowded, expensive, very hot

September-October: Excellent weather, harvest season, cultural events, good value

November-March: Mild winter, quiet, some attractions closed, ideal for gardens

==== Money and Costs ====

Currency: Euro (€)

ATMs: Available throughout town





Credit Cards: Widely accepted, but some small establishments prefer cash

Tipping: Service included in restaurant bills, but round up or leave small tip (5-10%) for good service

Budget Estimate (per person per day):

- Budget: €60-100 (hostel, casual meals, free activities)
- Mid-range: €150-250 (3-star hotel, mix of restaurants, paid attractions)
- Luxury: €350+ (4-star hotel, fine dining, exclusive experiences)

==== Language ====

Official: French

Also Spoken: Italian (especially near border), English (in tourist areas)

Useful Phrases:

- Bonjour = Hello
- Merci = Thank you
- S'il vous plaît = Please
- Parlez-vous anglais? = Do you speak English?
- L'addition, s'il vous plaît = The check, please
- Où est...? = Where is...?



Language Tip: Basic French courtesy phrases are appreciated, even if you continue in English. Staff in tourist areas generally speak English, but making an effort with French is valued.

==== Safety ====

Menton is very safe. Standard precautions:

- Watch for pickpockets in crowded areas (markets, festivals)
- Don't leave valuables visible in cars
- Be cautious on steep old town stairs, especially when wet
- Sun protection essential—very strong sun year-round

==== Events and Festivals ====

Fête du Citron (Lemon Festival): Mid-February to early March. Spectacular citrus sculptures, parades, concerts. Book accommodation months ahead.[16)]

Chamber Music Festival: August. Classical concerts in historic venues.





Festival des Jardins de la Côte d'Azur: May-June. Garden exhibitions and events.

Les Soirées du Parvis Saint-Michel: Summer evening concerts on the old town square.

Christmas Market: December. Traditional market in gardens.

===== Sample Itineraries =====

==== One Day Nice to Menton ====

Morning:

- 9:00 AM: Depart Nice via bus Line 100
- Brief stops in Villefranche and Beaulieu
- 11:00 AM: Arrive Menton, explore old town

Afternoon:

- Lunch in old town
- Visit one garden (Serre de la Madone or Val Rahmeh)
- Explore Cocteau museum

Evening:

- Stroll promenade
- Dinner
- Return to Nice by train

==== Two Days Nice to Menton ====

Day 1:

- Morning: Depart Nice, stops in Villefranche, Beaulieu
- Optional detour: Èze Village
- Afternoon: Arrive Menton, check into hotel
- Explore old town, cemetery, sunset views
- Dinner in old town

Day 2:

- Morning: Visit 2-3 gardens with combined ticket
- Lunch
- Afternoon: Cocteau museums, market, shopping
- Evening: Beachfront stroll, dinner on promenade
- Return to Nice or extend stay

==== Three Days Nice to Menton ====

Day 1:

- Leisurely journey with multiple stops
- Villefranche, Beaulieu, Èze, Monaco
- Arrive Menton evening




Day 2:

- Full day Menton: old town, churches, museums
- Gardens afternoon
- Fine dining evening

Day 3:

- Morning: Market, shopping
- Day trip to Sospel or Italian border
- Afternoon: Beach relaxation
- Return to Nice or extend

===== Conclusion =====

The journey from Nice to Menton offers a concentrated experience of the French Riviera's greatest attractions: dramatic coastal scenery, medieval villages, Belle Époque grandeur, and the unique microclimate that has drawn visitors for over 150 years. Menton itself represents the culmination of this journey—a town that has preserved its authentic character while offering world-class gardens, culture, and cuisine.

Whether completed as a day trip or extended over several days, this route provides an unforgettable introduction to the Côte d'Azur's beauty and cultural richness. The combination of natural splendor, historical depth, and contemporary vitality makes this one of Europe's most rewarding travel experiences.

As the French say: **“Voir Menton et mourir”** (See Menton and die)—a play on the more famous phrase about Naples, suggesting that once you've experienced Menton's beauty, you've seen perfection.

===== External Links =====

Official Tourism:

- Menton Tourism Office - Official Site
- Nice Tourism - Official Site
- France Tourism - Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

Transportation:

- TER PACA - Regional Trains
- Lignes d'Azur - Bus Network
- Alpes-Maritimes Department - Bus Line 100

Museums and Attractions:

- Musée Jean Cocteau Menton
- Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild (Beaulieu)
- Villa Kérylos (Beaulieu)



Restaurants:



- Mirazur - 3 Michelin Stars

Gardens:

- Menton Gardens - Official Information

===== Further Reading =====

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Bon voyage! Boun voyage!

1)
Baedeker, Karl. *The Mediterranean: Seaports and Sea Routes*. 1911.
2)

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