

What's



May

May is one of the most action-packed months of the year on the Riviera. The jet setters and celebrities hit the coast for the 64th Cannes Film Festival, which takes centre stage from the 11th–22nd of the month. In Monaco, another highlight in the Riviera's calendar, the Grand Prix, comes to town. If you're looking for a little less glitz and glamour, the Fêtes de Mai are held every Sunday throughout May in the gardens and amphitheatre of Cimiez, Nice, featuring music, picnics and festivities.

June

The town of Menton opens the doors of its beautiful subtropical gardens to the public this month. The microclimate in Menton make its gardens unique and especially popular with visitors.

If you're here on the 21st, you'll experience the annual Fête de la Musique, an event that takes place in towns and cities all over France. In Nice you'll see plenty of free concerts in the streets and bars, especially in the Old Town of Nice.

The Ironman competition makes its annual visit to Nice on the last weekend of the month, attracting hoards of competitors and spectators alike. This gruelling triathlon features a 3.8km swim and 180km bike ride, followed by a marathon, all under the blazing Niçois sun.

July

Music lovers flock to the Côte d'Azur in July to enjoy performances from world-renowned acts. The Nice Jazz Festival takes place mid-month in the Jardins Albert Ier. If you're still longing for more, head along the coast to Juan-les-Pins for Jazz à Juan to enjoy concerts in a beautiful setting by sea.

If you're here for the 14th July, France's Fête Nationale, head to the beach for a spectacular fireworks display; every town will have its own. Shopaholics will want to take advantage of the summer sales, from mid-July to mid-August.

August

Over the months of July and August, Cannes sparkles with its Festival Pyrotechnique, a firework competition in which countries battle it out to have the best display. The contest is held throughout July and August. In Haut-de-Cagnes, the medieval Festival, La Fête Médiévale de Cagnes, celebrates its history with authentic costumes, jousting tournaments and numerous stalls and exhibitions.

The Fête de la Sainte Claire takes over St-Paul-de-Vence from the 5th–7th August. It's celebrated annually with two days and three nights of festivities ending with a dazzling firework display.

Back in Nice, the Concerts du Cloître make the perfect relaxing ending to a hot summer day and are worth the trip up to Cimiez.

September

The Festival de la Plaisance, Cannes' International Boat and Yacht Show, attracts yacht enthusiasts to the port of Cannes to marvel at the luxurious yachts on display. You can catch some of the most extravagant boats around, from all corners of the world, maybe even tempting you to buy a slice of the Riviera high life. In Nice too, the spotlight is on the port where the annual Fête du Port takes place. Join in the festivities including food, drink, music and fireworks. This year will be extra special as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Nice becoming part of France. For the more active among us, the International Nice Triathlon also takes place this month.

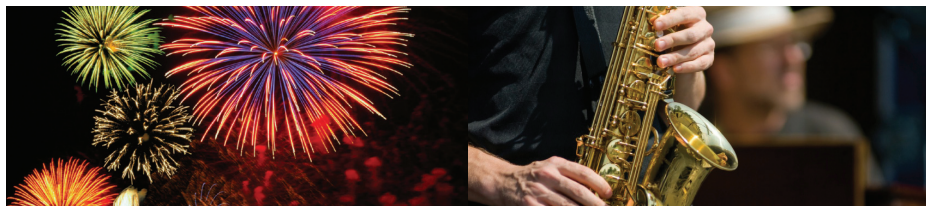
October

This month the MIPCOM is held in Cannes. It's an annual get together for the entertainment industry to buy and sell hit TV shows to other countries. You never know who you might see outside the Palais des Festivals!

It's all about quality, regional produce in St-Paul-de-Vence this month with local producers markets and more in the Semaine du Goût.

Halloween isn't widely celebrated in France, though you

On



can join in the fun with the expats at several of the bars, and some shops in the Nice Old Town offer sweets to children in costume.

November

The Nice-Cannes marathon takes place this month, in which the brave athletes complete a demanding (albeit scenic) 42km race starting on the Promenade des Anglais and crossing the finish line on the Croisette in Cannes. In Monaco, the Salon de la Gastronomie welcomes all foodies to watch professional chefs whip up mouth-watering dishes, as well as tasting sessions and much more.

December

With its 300 days of sunshine a year, the French Riviera may not be the obvious Christmas destination; however, there's no shortage of festivities. Christmas markets spring up in most towns and villages on the Riviera throughout the month of December, the perfect setting to enjoy mulled wine or freshly made crêpes smothered with Nutella. In Nice, an ice rink opens in Place Masséna and Santa is on hand to welcome the kids. If you're dreaming of a white Christmas, hit the slopes at Isola 2000, Auron or Valberg. The torch lit descents on the 24th provide a film-worthy setting for a real French Christmas.

January

Epiphany may mark the end of the festive season, but it's the perfect reason to indulge in the *galette des rois*, traditionally eaten at this time of year. The Midem music festival in Cannes introduces new artists to the European market, while the NRJ music awards attracts more established acts to the Croisette. Still in Cannes, hit the shopping festival, where big names show off their new collections, or better yet, hit the shops for designer labels at discounted prices; the winter sales run from mid-January to mid-February. January is also the perfect month to hit the slopes and several ski resorts including Auron and Isola 2000 are

easily accessible from coastal towns.

February

February brings thousands of visitors to the Côte d'Azur for the annual festivals. Nice Carnaval is one of the highlights of the Niçois calendar and includes three weeks of parades, flowers and fireworks. Across in Menton, the Fête du Citron is in full swing. Menton is well known for its exceptional lemons and in 1929 a local hotelier held a lemon and flower festival in the hotel gardens. It was such a success that in 1934 the Fête du Citron was officially born.

March

The Foire Internationale de Nice is an exhibition unlike any other, held annually in the spring. You'll find furniture and home improvement ideas along with beauty products and massage. In Monaco, choose between the Monaco marathon and the less strenuous Monte Carlo Spring Arts Festival where you can enjoy music, theatre and more.

April

Tennis fans shouldn't miss the ATP Masters Series in Monte Carlo, a popular stop on the Masters tour for many of the top players in preparation for the French Open. Lucky spectators can watch Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer battle it out for the title at the Monte Carlo country club, so be sure to book your tickets in advance. Sailing fans look out for the Régates de la Baie des Anges, a weekend of sailing races in Nice's bay, organised by local sailing clubs.

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