



Provence

POP 2.67 MILLION

Includes ➔

Marseille	764
Aix-en-Provence	780
Arles	786
Avignon	799
Villeneuve-lès-Avignon	806
Orange	807
Carpentras	814
Apt	817
Gorges du Verdon	824

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Le Chalet du Pharo (p777)
- ➔ 83.Vernet (p803)
- ➔ La Telline (p793)
- ➔ La Coquillade (p821)
- ➔ Maison Druout (p797)
- ➔ Le Sanglier Paresseux (p823)

Best Markets

- ➔ Carpentras (Friday; p814)
- ➔ Aix-en-Provence (Sunday; p780)
- ➔ St-Rémy de Provence (Wednesday; p796)
- ➔ Vaison-la-Romaine (Tuesday; p811)
- ➔ Arles (Saturday; p786)

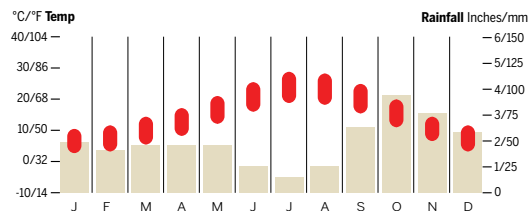
Why Go?

Provence evokes picture-postcard images of lavender fields, medieval hilltop villages, bustling markets and superb food and wine. Less expected is Provence's incredible diversity. The Vaucluse and Luberon epitomise the Provençal cliché. But near the mouth of the Rhône in the Camargue, craggy limestone yields to bleached salt marshes specked pink with flamingos, and the light, which so captivated Van Gogh and Cézanne, begins to change. Then there's the serpentine Gorges du Verdon, its pea-green water lorded over by half-mile-high limestone walls and craggy mountain peaks beyond. The region's other *belle surprises* are its cities: sultry Marseille and Roman Arles.

Constant across the region is the food – clean, bright flavours, as simple as sweet tomatoes drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with *fleur de sel* (sea salt) from the Camargue.

When to Go

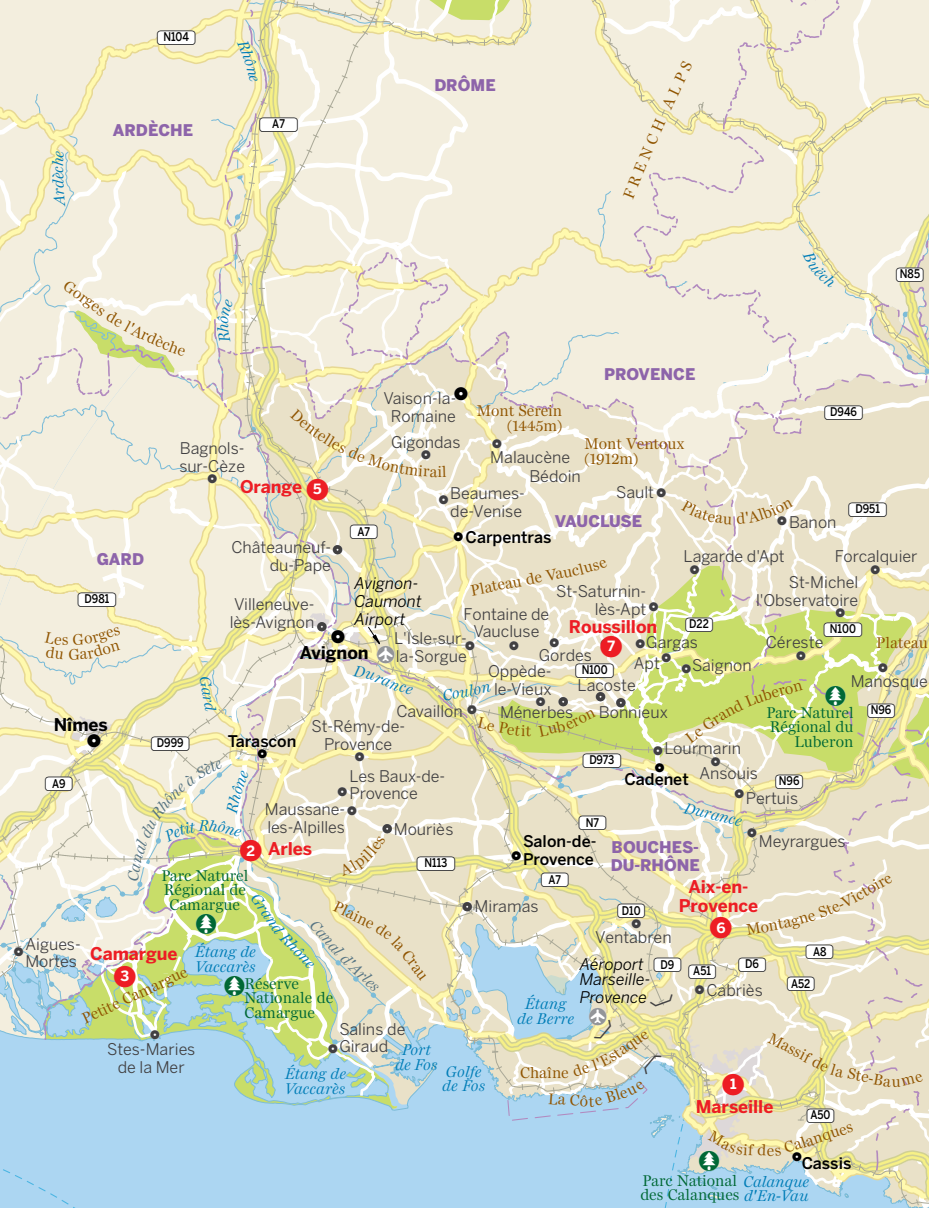
Marseille



Easter Kick off the bullfighting season (no blood) with Féria d'Arles.

Jul & Aug Wade through purple lavender in bloom and watch artists perform at Festival d'Avignon.

Sep & Oct Wait for cooling temperatures and the grape harvest to bike the back roads of the Luberon.



Provence Highlights

1 Soaking up seething, heady **Marseille** (p764) with its ancient port and stunning contemporary architecture around Fort St-Jean

2 Trailing Van Gogh around **Arles** (p786), from the state-of-the-art Fondation Vincent Van Gogh to spots around town where he painted some of his best-known canvases

3 Spotting pink flamingos while riding white horses in the **Camargue** (p791)

4 Canoeing, canyoning, rock climbing or hiking along the vertigo-inducing **Gorges du Verdon** (p824)