



Marseille to Aix-en-Provence

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Best Places to Eat

- » Restaurant Pierre Reboul (p168)
- » La Cantinetta (p157)
- » La Table de Ventabren (p171)
- » Le Café des Épices (p156)
- » Le Petit Verdod (p169)
- » L'Épisetette (p157)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hôtel La Résidence du Vieux Port (p155)
- » L'Épicerie (p167)
- » Le Ryad (p155)
- » Hôtel Vertigo (p155)
- » Casa Honoré (p155)

Why Go?

Radiating out from the Vieux Port, Marseille's irresistible magnetism draws you in to its vibrant, polyglot heart. The city has undergone an extensive facelift for its reign as European Capital of Culture 2013, and now boasts world-class museums, galleries and performing arts. Allow yourself at least 48 hours to take in Marseille's compelling sights, and the dramatic Les Calanques – rocky inlets gashed by the seas of the ice age resulting in the spectacular coastline that snakes southeast to Cassis. Heading north from Marseille, the landscape softens to the green and purple hues of Pays d'Aix (Aix Country) that Cézanne loved so much, with charming, bourgeois Aix-en-Provence at its centre.

Driving Distances (km)

Cassis	49			
Marignane (Airport)	34	56		
Marseille	34	23	26	
Salon de Provence	34	72	34	30
	Aix-en-Provence	Cassis	Marignane (Airport)	Marseille

Getting Around

Unlike most of Provence, which is best seen with your own wheels, you will be grateful in Marseille and Aix-en-Provence *not* to have a car. Driving is difficult, parking expensive. Public transport is super in both cities. To really explore Les Calanques and to drive the jaw-dropping Route des Crêtes near Cassis, though, a car is handy.

THREE PERFECT DAYS

Day 1: Sensory Marseille

Engage in Marseille's frenzy of sights, sounds, smells and flavours: follow the sound of clinking masts to the Vieux Port fish market. Grab a coffee at La Caravelle (p159) and sail to Château d'If (p151). Explore Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée (p145) and get lost in Le Panier (p145). Then take a seaside stroll to Vallon des Auffes for *bouillabaisse* (p157).

Day 2: Gorge on Green

Hike into Les Calanques (p170), booking a table in advance at one of the seaside restaurants. Post-lunch, take a scenic drive around Cassis (p163). Wine taste in the afternoon and sup on sea urchins and crisp white wine at Cassis port.

Day 3: Cézanne Chic

Stroll Aix-en-Provence (p164): from the windy streets of Vieil Aix to its elegant *hôtels particuliers* (private mansions) and the Musée Granet (p165). Follow in the footsteps of Cézanne (p165), then explore Montagne Ste-Victoire (p171). End with a starlit dinner in best-kept secret Ventabren (p171).

Advance Planning

» **Accommodation** The best rooms get snapped up fast – book ahead. Aix-en-Provence fills fast during its fiesta of festivals and at weekends year-round. Its tourist office runs a booking office and, November to March, books hotels offering two nights for the price of one.

» **Sormiou & Morgiou Calanques** To revel in the natural beauty of Marseille's best-known *calanques* at sunset, minus a stiff walk in the searing heat, reserve a table at a Sormiou or Morgiou restaurant, which grants you the right to drive right down to the water's edge.

DON'T MISS

The explosion of galleries (p145) and performing arts events at the Marseille-Provence 2013 European Capital of Culture (www.mp2013.fr) extends from Marseille to Aix-en-Provence and Arles, and promises rich cultural life for years to come.

Best Escapes

- » Les Calanques (p161, p164)
- » Vauvenargues & Montagne Ste-Victoire (p171)
- » Massif de la Ste-Baume (p162)
- » Domaine de la Brillane (p171)

Best Tours & Courses

- » Aix-en-Provence Walking Tours (p167)
- » Calissons du Roy René (p168)
- » Sea Kayaking the Calanques (p161)

Resources

- » **Marseille City Website** (www.marseille.fr)
- » **Marseille Tourisme** (www.marseille-tourisme.com) Tourist office online.
- » **Visit Provence** (www.visitprovence.com) Info on Bouches du Rhône département; great itineraries.
- » **EuroMéditerranée** (www.euromediterranee.fr) Largest urban renewal project in Europe: Marseille.