

ROADTRIPS

The Ultimate in Sports Travel

PRESENTS

A GUIDE TO
MONACO

Monaco



Monaco is one of our favorite places to visit and the Grand Prix is a highlight for our guests as well as our hosts every year. There are few places in this world as glamorous as Monaco. This tiny principality along the French Riviera is one of the world's most attractive and fascinating destinations. You've probably heard it referred to as a playground for the rich and famous and to be fair, we think Monaco's popularity is completely justified. It has a stunning coastline, extraordinary restaurants, amazing shopping, first class attractions, and a chic vibe that's so uniquely Monégasque.

In case you need a geography refresher, Monaco is an independent country surrounded by France on 3 sides and the picturesque Mediterranean Sea on the other. At just 3 miles long and 1.5 miles wide, it's the second smallest country in the world (only Vatican City is smaller). The country is divided into a number of districts, Monte-Carlo being the most famous one. Small but mighty, this is one destination that's deserving of your bucket list.



Meet our Monaco Expert

Duane Penner



A lifelong traveller, Duane Penner lived in a number of different countries before returning to his native Canada. We were fortunate to have him join the Roadtrips team in 2000, where his passion for

travel and sport along with his international and entrepreneurial backgrounds make him a perfect fit as Roadtrips' VP of Sales.

While Monaco has plenty of admirers, Penner has developed a deep affinity for this unique destination. He's lost count of how many times he's been there, but it's somewhere in the double digits, including three summer-long visits. Says Penner, "I love it for a few reasons: it is stunningly beautiful, the rugged coastline and blue Mediterranean waters, the quaint historic towns alongside the glamour and sophistication of Monte Carlo...it just has it all, and it's dazzlingly pretty."

In addition to being an experienced world traveller, Penner has hosted at some of the biggest sporting events in the world. Still, Monte Carlo and the Monaco Grand Prix remain a highlight, year after year. "Whether I'm living like a local enjoying Coeur de Boeuf tomatoes and quiche from a local market or being wowed by the sensory overload of yachts, cars, and pretty people during the Grand Prix, Monaco is just great."



Travel Tips

What Monaco lacks in size, it makes up for in entertainment. During the Grand Prix weekend, Monaco is at its best and our knowledgeable onsite host team will be available to help you see the best of the principality.

As is usual when traveling outside of our familiar surroundings, there are always challenges present. In Monaco, we've found these challenges to be minimal. The region is considered safe and clean, it's small enough that you can walk almost anywhere, restaurants and shops are plentiful (see page 21 for our recommendations) and although French is the official language, English and Italian are also widely spoken.

One of the great things about travelling with Roadtrips is our team of professional hosts comprised of international sporting event experts and local hosts. We at Roadtrips want to help set your expectations and do whatever we can to ensure that you are prepared for everything you may encounter in Monaco and to create the best possible experience for our Grand Prix guests.



Getting to Monaco

The closest international airport to Monaco is Nice Côte d'Azur Airport (NCE), just 14 miles outside of Monaco. For Monaco Grand Prix weekend, flights fill up quickly and we recommend booking early to secure your preferred routing and schedule.



" I love to get out and see what surrounds this little principality. Many of its lovely neighbors that are worth a visit are well known: Nice, Cannes, Saint Paul de Vence, Èze and St. Tropez are all worth the trek. But some of its lesser known coastal cousins are so worth a trip as well, potentially none more than Menton. The last French stop before Italy, this sleepy little town boasts great food, from Michelin starred Mirazur to local family run restaurants. The seafood is as good as anywhere in the world and some of its own regional specialities like barbajuan (an Italian influenced ravioli), or pichade (a tomatoey tart) make it a foodie's paradise. It is actually quite funny how wonderful and sleepy this little town is with a hard partying and glamorous neighbor like Monte Carlo and the Grand Prix right next door."

Our Top 5 Things to do in Monaco

I. Arrive in Style

If you're going to do Monaco, you've got to do it right and that's why helicopter transfers from Nice airport are a recommended inclusion for our Monte-Carlo guests. Not only will you feel like royalty, you'll get some spectacular views of the principality and the coast from the air. As a bonus, it's also the fastest way to get you to this amazing destination.





2. Palais du Prince

Yes, it's one of those attractions that you'll find in every travel guide but it really is spectacular. The walk up to the palace will take you through the narrow cobblestone streets of Old Monte-Carlo (Monaco-Ville), which is deserving of a visit in itself. Once you arrive at the Palais you can marvel at the grandeur of this magnificent piece of architecture, home to the ruling Grimaldi family for over 700 years. It's worth timing your visit to coincide with the changing of the guard at 11:55 a.m. While you're there, don't forget to check out the stunning view (yes, they do seem to be everywhere) of the city down below.

3. Casino de Monte-Carlo

This isn't your typical casino. Even non-gamblers will be impressed by this 150+ year-old famed institution. Its elegant Belle Époque décor is stunning and the clientele equally so. Go for the games, the drinks or take a tour. Words don't do it justice, it's a must see. People watching at its best.

4. Oceanographic Museum

If you're traveling with the family (or even if you're not), the Oceanographic Museum near the Prince's Palace is a cool place to visit. The building itself is actually built into the rock, a pretty spectacular sight. There are close to one hundred aquariums full of thousands of marine species to check out. We also love the rooftop restaurant; it's a great place for some refreshment during or after your visit.

5. Exotic Garden of Monaco

There are few things that shock us about Monaco anymore. The principality has everything so why wouldn't it have one of the world's most extensive collections of exotic succulents (simply defined as plants which have acclimatized to dry climates e.g. cacti) on display. In all seriousness though, this unique garden is absolutely fascinating. Unlike your typical garden, you'll wander alongside craggy cliffs and underground caverns. Plants have been brought in from all over the world and put on display in this impressive garden, which has been around for over 80 years.



"I usually recommend that if at all possible, people stay in Monte Carlo during the Grand Prix. I'd rather go with less expensive seating or hotel over location since a big part of this event is just being in Monte Carlo to experience all the glamour, the yachts, the cars, the beautiful people...all the excitement that is the Monaco Grand Prix."

Accommodations

In this principality that is known for the finer things, the accommodations are no exception. The hotels here are some of the most luxurious anywhere. Those who travel with us to the Monaco Grand Prix will have access to some of the best properties in the region. Our hotels are carefully chosen not only for their quality, but also for their prime location and impressive amenities.

One of the things that is great about our curated selection of properties is that our guests can choose their preferred hotel experience. From the formal and elegant Hotel Hermitage to the younger and more relaxed Le Meridien Beach Plaza, we feel it's important to pick the location and type of accommodations that best fits your mood and style. Part of the decision is whether to stay at Casino Square, which during the Grand Prix is really quite busy, or to choose a little more space closer to Larvotto Beach.

For those that like to start the day with a walk or run, or want to stay a little outside the bottleneck that is Casino Square, our recommendation would be either the Le Meridien Beach Plaza or the Monte Carlo Bay Hotel.

Le Meridien Beach Plaza



Boasting an exclusive private beach, this modern resort hotel is a very nice hotel and a great value during the Grand Prix. Le Meridien has great views to the Mediterranean, is contemporary in design, relaxed and chic in its vibe, and it's outside of the crush of Casino Square, perfect for an early morning run or a walk on the beach followed by a frothy cappuccino. The food options are good, but not great, though you have lots of great options within a few minutes walk of the hotel. The gym, indoor and outdoor pools, and beach are second to none in Monaco. The rooms are well designed and spacious by European standards. Beds are comfortable and the Malin & Goetz bathroom amenities are a nice touch.

Monte Carlo Bay Hotel



This luxury hotel was built on reclaimed land and was a welcome addition to the hotel scene in Monaco. Essentially next door to the Le Meridien, this property also allows you a bit of breathing room during the Grand Prix. This lavishly designed hotel has a Vegas meets French Riviera feel with expensive gardens, a grand entrance,

and extensive views of the sea. The swimming pool complex is happening and includes a sand bottomed pool, a giant glass panelled conservatory and a well equipped fitness facility with a plush spa and yoga classes. The rooms are spacious with bathrooms that boast separate shower and bath, with amenities from the hotel's Cinq Mondes Spa. With an in-house Michelin starred restaurant, Blue Bay, you know they are committed to providing guests with culinary delights. A lagoon-facing terrace at L'Hippocampe makes for a relaxing on-property snack or cocktail.

Hotel Hermitage



One of the grande dames of the hotel scene in Monaco is the elegant Hotel Hermitage. This Belle Epoque palace is tucked away behind the Hotel de Paris and is a favorite of those pretending to fly under the radar. This opulent 19th century palace has all the gold leaf and marble topped commodes you would expect, given the line of Lamborghinis and Bentleys "discreetly" parked out front. Service is courteous and competent, with female staff adorned with silk scarves and waistcoated bellboys. Guests can charge any Monte Carlo SBM facilities to their room including one of the most impressive thermal spas in Europe. Rooms feature Louis XV style furniture and wallpaper, bathrooms contain

plenty of marble, and products are by the legendary Parisian perfume maker Francis Kurkdjian. The Michelin-starred Pavillon is a highlight, though any of the hotel's eateries come with plenty of prestige wines and vintage champagne, making sure you don't forget you are dining in a palace.

Hotel Metropole



The Metropole manages to seamlessly bridge a number of themes and styles, making it the choice for rockstars and royalty alike. Behind the monumental Belle Epoque facade, this hotel perfectly delivers both classic elegance and a relaxed modern vibe. The bar and lounge are a 21st century take on a 19th century drawing room. There are books and tapestries bathed in light and space. Just up from the casino and off the Boulingrins Gardens, it could not be more central. And then there is the name dropping; from the Michelin-starred cuisine at Christophe Cussac's Les Ambassadeurs to Karl Lagerfeld's creation, Odyssey, a pool and restaurant oasis available only to hotel and spa guests, this hotel has cachet to spare. The rooms combine period furniture, flowing fabrics, art and artifacts with contemporary sensitivity and comfort.

You will feel like a royal noble, except that these rooms are too well thought out for that. They may be pricey, but live a weekend in them and you will swear it is completely worth it.

Please note Hotel Metropole will be under construction during the 2025 Monaco Grand Prix.

And, for a hidden gem and completely other experience...

Cap Estel



Set on a tiny peninsula just outside the borders of Monaco, this small, luxurious gated mansion is the perfect A-list hideaway. Only minutes from the glitz and excitement of the Grand Prix, it offers its guests the very best of discreet service and luxe surroundings. With only 20 rooms and suites across four different spaces, each with expansive views of the sea, this lush property combines elegant design and decor with the latest in technology. Add the Michelin starred creations of chef Patrick Raingeard and you truly have the ultimate in discreet luxury and exceptional service.

"I highly recommend Les Perles de Monte Carlo. I am not even a huge oyster fan (which is their specialty) but this is a must experience little gem. It actually started as an oyster farm for the grand restaurants of Monaco, and now includes a casual little eatery with amazing seafood. It is literally built into the end of the pier in Fontvieille and is still a working seafood farm so the inside of the building is just that with a small eating terrace outside. With less than 40 seats and limited hours, you need to plan your meals accordingly, but if you like the freshest seafood, done in the style of Brittany, you may not find a treasure like this anywhere else."

Monaco Restaurant Guide

If you've travelled with us before, you'll know we have some big foodies on staff and with that said, one of the best things about Monaco is its food. There are plenty of exceptional restaurants, from casual dining to multi-Michelin starred establishments. While you can explore a multitude of different cuisines, Monaco's gastronomy highlights are Monégasque, Italian, Mediterranean and French influenced.



Chèvre d'Or

📍 www.chevredor.com/uk/chateau-chevre-d-or-eze-official-site.php

There are plenty of breathtaking views along the Mediterranean but some of the best are from the Chèvre d'Or in Eze, just down the coast from Monaco. With two Michelin stars, executive chef Tom Meyer serves up divine food accompanied by an extensive wine list to complement the view. This is one that we love going back to over and over.

Les Perles de Monte Carlo

📍 www.perlesdemontecarlo.com/en

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Maya Bay Thai

📍 www.mayabay.mc

The food here is as blissful as the Thai Beach it's named after. Enjoy traditional Thai dishes alongside more contemporary versions fused with European elements. Don't forget to leave some room for the extensive dessert selection.

Yoshi

📍 www.metropole.com/en/restaurant-montecarlo/yoshi/

Our guests who stay at the Hotel Metropole are lucky to have this gem in the building. Chef Takeo Yamazaki is at the helm and, along with his team, delivers an outstanding dining experience. Michelin-star-awarded since 2010, Yoshi serves up some of the very best Japanese cuisine in Monte Carlo. Everything here is excellent: the food, the service, the wine list, and the stunning design. Highly recommended.



Beef Bar

📍 www.beefbar.com/monaco/

This one is for all the meat lovers out there. Complete with its own butcher shop, Beefbar serves up succulent cuts of Wagyu, Angus and more, prepared to perfection. This trendy eatery looks out onto the harbour, providing spectacular views along with your meal.

Blue Bay

📍 www.montecarlobay.com/restaurants-and-bars/blue-bay/

The Blue Bay's creative menu likely played a big part in it being awarded a Michelin star. Perfectly located for our Monte Carlo Bay Hotel guests, it's one of the hottest restaurants in town. We recommend dining al fresco on the restaurant's gorgeous terrace.

La Table d'Elise

📍 www.latabledelise.mc/restaurant/en/restaurant/

La Table d'Elise offers a "natural and zen" atmosphere, designed with light oak woodwork and gorgeous dark green chairs. The Mediterranean menu includes plenty of fresh seafood prepared with seasonal ingredients, a wonderful option for lunch or dinner.

Marché de la Condamine

While Monaco is deservedly known for offering some of the best dining from culinary heavyweights like Ducasse and Robuchon, if you want a different food experience, albeit at the other end of the spectrum, spend some time at the Marché de la Condamine, which is just off the Place d'Armes. This market has existed since the late 1800s and is very popular with the locals, making it a great opportunity for you to hear a little of the Monégasque language. It's also a great place to sample some Barbajuan, socca, or pissaladières. Add to that some wonderful pizzas, fresh fruits and vegetables, pasta and pastry, and a cool drink and it's easy to while away a wonderful afternoon among the locals.



Shopping in Monaco

Monaco is well known as a shopper's paradise and is the perfect destination for those in need of some retail therapy. There are more than enough shops to appease the power shoppers, particularly those looking for jewelry or high fashion items. If it all seems a bit overwhelming, our Roadtrips hosts can arrange a personal shopping tour to some of the highlights.





Cercle d'Or

If you want to shop with the *haut monde*, Cercle d'Or is the spot for high fashion in Monaco. On par with Rodeo Drive, Fifth Avenue and the other fashion meccas of the world, Cercle d'Or is where you'll find all the major labels. It's pricey no doubt, but the window shopping is free.

Le Metropole Shopping Center

For a slightly less grand shopping experience, check out Le Metropole Shopping Center, conveniently located at the Hotel Metropole. The giant chandeliers and the elegant marble and wrought iron interior will quickly tip you off to the fact that it's not your ordinary shopping mall, but with 80 shops and a number of restaurants, there is something here for most.

Ventimiglia

While Monaco is brimming with upscale shopping possibilities, one of our favorite shopping experiences is something quite different. For those looking for something a little more off the beaten path, we suggest heading 45 minutes down the road and across the border into Italy. Ventimiglia is just a few miles from the French border and if you visit on market day, you're sure to find some unique items while enjoying a lovely day soaking up all things Italian.

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