

Orientation to Cannes

Don't sleep or drive in Cannes. Day-trip here by train or bus. It's a breeze, as trains and buses run frequently along the Riviera, and they all stop in Cannes. There's baggage storage at the train station, and you can pick up a city map at the TI or the train information desk. Buses arrive next to the train station. If you must drive, store your car at the parking garage next to the train station.

Tourist Information: Cannes' glamorously quiet main TI is located in the Film Festival Hall at 1 Boulevard de la Croisette (daily July-Aug 9:00-20:00, Sept-June 10:00-19:00).

Cannes Walk

This self-guided cancan will take you to Cannes' sights in a level, one-hour walk at a movie-star pace.

• From the train station, cross the street, veer left, and walk for five unglamorous minutes down Rue des Serbes to the beachfront. Cross the busy Boulevard de la Croisette and make your way past snack stands to the sea. Find the round lookout and get familiar with...

The Lay of the Land: Cannes feels different from its neighbors to the east. You won't find the pastel oranges and pinks of Old Nice and Villefranche-sur-Mer. Cannes was never part of Italy—and its architecture and cuisine reminds me more of Paris than Nice.

Face the water. The land jutting into the sea on your left is actually two islands, St-Honorat and Ste-Marguerite. St-Honorat

has been the property of monks for over 500 years; today its abbey, vineyards, trails, and gardens can be visited by peace-seeking travelers. Ste-Marguerite, which you also can visit, is famous for the stone prison that housed the 17th-century Man in the Iron Mask (whose true identity



remains unknown). For more on visiting these islands, see page 414.

Now look to your right. Those striking mountains sweeping down to the sea are the Massif de l'Esterel. Their red-rock outcrops oversee spectacular car and train routes (see page 415). Closer in, the hill with the medieval tower caps Cannes' old town (Le Suquet). This hilltop offers grand views and pretty lanes, but little else. Below the old town, the port welcomes yachts of all sizes... provided they're big.

Face inland. Close on the left, find the unexceptional, cream-colored building that's home to the famous film festival (we'll visit there soon). Back the other way, gaze up the boulevard. That classy

Handy Cannes and St-Tropez Phrases

Where is a movie star?	Où est une vedette?
I am a movie star.	Je suis une vedette.
I am rich and single.	Je suis riche et célibataire.
Are you rich and single?	Etes-vous riche et célibataire?
Are those real?	Ils sont des vrais?
How long is your yacht?	Quelle est la longueur de votre yacht?
How much did that cost?	Combien coûtait-il?
You can always dream...	On peut toujours rêver...

building with twin black-domed roofs is Hôtel Carlton, our eventual target and as far as we'll go together in that direction.

• *Continue with the sea on your right and stroll the...*

Promenade (La Croisette): You're walking along Boulevard de la Croisette—Cannes' famed two-mile-long promenade. First popular with kings who wintered here after Napoleon fell, the elite parade was later joined by British aristocracy. Today, Boulevard de la Croisette is fronted by some of the most expensive apartments and hotels in Europe. If it's lunchtime, you might try one of the beach cafés. **Plage le Goéland's** café has fair prices.

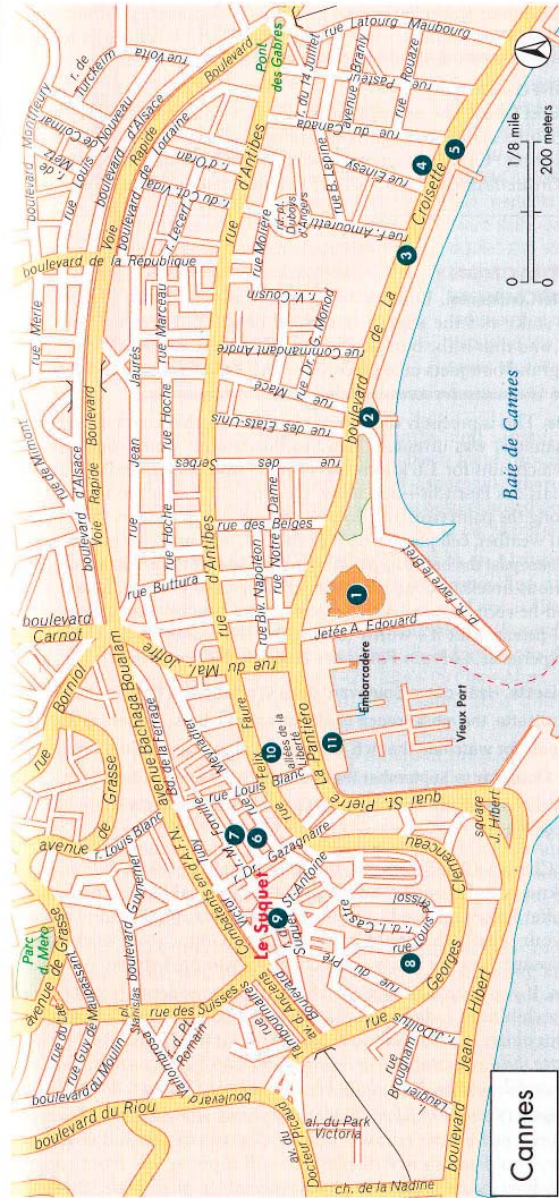


• *Stop when you get to...*

Hôtel Carlton: This is the most famous address on Boulevard de la Croisette (small Db-€1,500, more spacious Db-€7,000). Face the beach. The iconic Cannes experience is to slip into a robe (ideally, monogrammed with your initials), out of your luxury hotel (preferably this one), and onto the beach or pier. While you may not be doing the "fancy hotel and monogrammed robe" ritual on this Cannes excursion, you can—for about €25—rent a



chair and umbrella and pretend you're tanning for a red-carpet premiere. Cannes has a few token public beaches, but most beaches are private and run by hotels like the Carlton. You could save money by sunning among the common folk, but the real Cannes way to flee the rabble and paparazzi is to rent a spot on a private beach.



Cross over and wander into the hotel—you're welcome to browse (harder during the festival). Ask for a hotel brochure, verify room rates, check for availability. Can all these people really afford this? Imagine the scene here during the film festival (see anyone famous?). An affordable café (considering the cost of a room) lies just beyond the champagne lounge.

• *You can continue your stroll down La Croisette, but I'm doubling back to the cream-colored building that is Cannes'...*

Film Festival Hall: Cannes' film festival (Festival de Cannes), staged since 1946, completes the "Big Three" of Riviera events (with Monaco's Grand Prix and Nice's Carnival). The hall where the festival takes place—a busy-but-nondescript convention center that also hosts the town TI—sits plump on the beach. You'll recognize the formal grand entryway (most likely without the famed red carpet). Find the famous (Hollywood-style) handprints in the sidewalk nearby. To get inside during



the festival, you have to be a star (or a photographer—some 3,000 paparazzi attend the gala event, and most bring their own ladders to get above the crowds).

The festival originated in part as an anti-fascist response to Mussolini's Venice Film Festival. Cannes' first festival was due to open in 1939, on the very day Hitler invaded Poland. Because of World War II, the opening was delayed until 1946. Cannes' film festival is also famous as the first festival to give one vote per country on the jury (giving films from smaller countries a better chance).

Though generally off-limits to curious tourists, the festival is all that matters around here—and is worth a day trip to Cannes if you happen to be in the region when it's on. The town buzzes with megastar energy, press passes, and revealing dresses. Locals claim that it's the world's third-biggest media event, after the Olympics and the World Cup (soccer). The festival prize is the Palme d'Or (like the Oscar for Best Picture). The French press can't cover the event enough, and the average Jean in France follows it as Joe would the World Series in the States. In 2015, 19 films were reviewed by the "film jury." The presidents of the jury were Joel and Ethan Coen (a.k.a. the Coen brothers).

• *Around the other side of the festival hall is the port (Gare Maritime).*

The Port and Old Town (Le Suquet): The megayachts line up closest to the Film Festival Hall. After seeing these amazing boats, everything else looks like a dinghy. Boat service to St-Tropez and the nearby islands of St-Honorat and Ste-Marguerite depart from

Yachters' Itinerary

If you're visiting Cannes on your private yacht, here's a suggested itinerary:

1. Take in the Festival de Cannes and the accompanying social scene. Organize an evening party on your boat.
2. Motor over to Monte Carlo for the Grand Prix, scheduled—conveniently for yachters—just after the film festival.
3. On your way back west to St-Tropez, deconstruct events from the film festival and Grand Prix with Brigitte Bardot.
4. Drop down to Porto Cervo on Sardinia, one of the few places in the world where your yacht is “just average.”
5. Head west to Ibiza and Marbella in Spain, where your friends are moored for the big party scene.

the far side of the port (at Quai Laubeuf; for boat info, see “Activities in Cannes,” later).

Cannes' oldest neighborhood, Le Suquet, crowns the hill past the port. Locals refer to it as their Montmartre. Artsy and charming, it's a steep 15-minute walk above the port, with little of interest except the panoramic views from its ancient church, Notre-Dame-de-l'Espérance (Our Lady of Hope).

• *To find the views in Le Suquet, aim for its clock tower and pass the bus station at the northwest corner of the port, then make your way up cobbled Rue Saint-Antoine (next to the Café St. Antoine). Turn left on Place du Suquet, and then follow signs to Traverse de la Tour for the final leg.*

Cue music. Roll end credits. Our film is over. For further exploration, look for Cannes' “underbelly” between Le Suquet and the train station—narrow lanes with inexpensive cafés and shops that regular folks can afford.

Activities in Cannes

Shopping

Cannes is made for window-shopping (the best streets are between the station and the waterfront). For the trendiest boutiques, stroll down handsome Rue d'Antibes (parallel to the sea about three blocks inland). Rue Meynadier anchors a pedestrian zone with more affordable shops closer to the port. To bring home a real surprise, why not consider cosmetic surgery? Cannes is well known as *the* place on the Riviera to have your face (or other parts) realigned.

Boat Excursions to St-Honorat and Ste-Marguerite Islands

Boats ferry tourists 15 minutes from the Quai Laubeuf dock in Cannes' port to St-Honorat and Ste-Marguerite, twin islands just offshore (€14 round-trip, daily 9:00-18:00, 1-2/hour, www.trans-