

EUROPE · CITY BREAKS · NIGHTLIFE · ARCHITECTURE · CULTURE



Monaco

Monaco crams a royal palace, a belle-époque casino and a Grand Prix circuit into two square kilometres of Riviera hillside. Watch the changing of the guard on the Rock, tour the cliff-top Oceanographic Museum, then follow the Formula 1 track past Port Hercule's superyachts to Casino Square. A day trip by train from Nice covers the highlights; staying overnight shows the quieter side.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Monaco and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 10 December 2025.

 CAPITAL Monaco	 CURRENCY Euro (EUR) £1 ≈ €1.19	 LANGUAGE French, English Italian, Monégasque	 BEST TIME May–Jun, Sep
 DAILY BUDGET £95–£600 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type C, E, F 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h direct to NCE ~£70–£250 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

The world's second-smallest country after the Vatican, Monaco has been tied to the Grimaldi family since 1297, when François Grimaldi seized the fortress on the Rock disguised as a monk. Its districts are stacked up a steep slope: Monaco-Ville, the old town and palace on the Rock; La Condamine around Port Hercule; Monte Carlo with its casino and grand hotels; and Fontvieille, built on reclaimed land. Most visitors arrive by train from Nice, walk up to the palace for the 11:55 changing of the guard, eat by the harbour and finish in Monte Carlo as the casino lights come on.

Everything is walkable, helped by free public lifts and escalators linking the levels, and you can cross the whole country on foot in under an hour. Prices are among Europe's highest, and terrace prices on Casino Square can startle, so many visitors stay along the coast in France. Cruise ships and the Grand Prix bring big crowds, but early mornings on the Rock are calm. It suits motor-racing fans, people-watchers and Riviera day-trippers. The surprise is how much ordinary life persists: a covered market at La Condamine, a top-flight football club and a fiercely proud Monégasque identity.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

ARCHITECTURE

Casino de Monte-Carlo

Charles Garnier, architect of the Paris Opéra, designed the casino's belle-époque façade and its opera hall. Visitors can tour the gilded salons in the morning; the gaming rooms require photo ID, smart dress and a minimum age of 18.
- 2

HISTORY

Prince's Palace and the Rock

The Grimaldis' palace crowns Monaco-Ville; arrive for the changing of the guard at 11:55, then wander the old town's lanes to the cathedral where Princess Grace and Prince Rainier III are buried.

3

CULTURE

Oceanographic Museum

Built into the sea cliff and opened in 1910 by Prince Albert I, this grand museum pairs a historic aquarium of Mediterranean and tropical species with a roof terrace looking along the Riviera; Jacques Cousteau directed it for three decades.

4

CITY

Grand Prix circuit walk

Trace the Formula 1 street circuit on foot: from Sainte-Dévote up the hill to Casino Square, down past the Fairmont hairpin towards the tunnel, then along the harbour to the swimming-pool section beside Port Hercule's superyachts.

5

BEACH

Larvotto Beach

Monaco's free public beach at the eastern end of Monte Carlo, with clear water, a protected marine area offshore and beach restaurants behind; arrive early in July and August to claim a spot.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Monaco

≈ 38,000 people

The whole principality is one continuous town; base yourself in Monte Carlo for nightlife or La Condamine for the port and market, or stay more cheaply in nearby France.

Monaco is a single city-state with no separate towns; its main districts are Monte Carlo, Monaco-Ville (the Rock), La Condamine and Fontvieille.

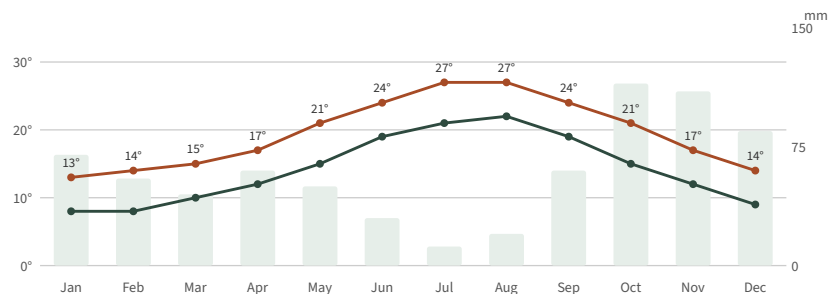
When to go to Monaco

Best time: **May–Jun, Sep.**



Average climate in Monaco

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jan

International Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo

Founded by Prince Rainier III in 1974, this January festival brings the world's leading circus acts to a big top in Fontvieille to compete for Golden and Silver Clowns.

May–Jun	Monaco Grand Prix Formula 1's most famous street race, usually held in late May or early June; grandstands, harbour-front terraces and hotels sell out months ahead, and roads close for days.
Sep	Monaco Yacht Show Each September Port Hercule fills with more than a hundred superyachts on display to buyers; tickets are expensive, but the spectacle is visible from the harbour walkways.

How much does Monaco cost?

SHOESTRING £95 per person / day ≈ €113 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £260 per person / day ≈ €309 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £600 per person / day ≈ €714 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Barbagian

Monaco's national snack: fried pastry parcels stuffed with Swiss chard, ricotta, onion and parmesan, eaten especially around National Day on 19 November.

Stocafi

Dried stockfish slow-cooked with tomatoes, black olives, garlic and white wine; a Monégasque dish with Ligurian roots, best tried in old-town restaurants.

Fougasse monégasque

Flat, crisp orange-blossom pastry scattered with almonds and red-and-white aniseed sprinkles in the national colours, sold around National Day.

Getting around

Monaco is best explored on foot, using the free public lifts and escalators that climb between levels. Local CAM buses link all districts, and a small electric boat bus crosses Port Hercule. Trains from Nice take around 20 minutes to Monaco–Monte-Carlo's underground station, and regional buses follow the coast road. Helicopters reach Nice airport in about seven minutes. Driving is rarely worth it: parking is expensive.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



230V — bring a UK-to-C/E/F adapter

DIALLING CODE

+377

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

TIPPING

Service is normally included in restaurant bills; round up or leave a few euros for good service, and tip hotel porters and valets.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Telephone: **112** on a mobile or **18** on a landline (ambulance, fire, police)

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

TIME ZONE

UTC+1 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the right

ETIQUETTE

Walking around in swimwear, bare-chested or barefoot away from the beach is prohibited and can bring a fine. Dress smartly for the casino and upmarket restaurants.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Nice Côte d'Azur Airport (NCE), Nice — across the border

Visas & entry for Monaco

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

France handles immigration matters for Monaco.

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Monaco, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel:

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Monaco

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 1 Nov 2026	All Saints' Day
Mon 2 Nov 2026	All Saints' Day (observed)
Thu 19 Nov 2026	Prince's Day
Tue 8 Dec 2026	Immaculate Conception
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day

Wed 27 Jan 2027	Saint Devote's Day
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Thu 6 May 2027	Ascension Day
Mon 17 May 2027	Pentecost Monday
Thu 27 May 2027	Corpus Christi
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Assumption Day
Mon 16 Aug 2027	Assumption Day (observed)

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in French

ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT
Hello	Bonjour	<i>bon-ZHOOR</i>
Thank you	Merci	<i>mair-SEE</i>
Please	S'il vous plaît	<i>seel voo PLAY</i>
Excuse me	Excusez-moi	<i>ex-KOO-zay MWAH</i>
How much is this?	C'est combien ?	<i>say kom-BYAN</i>

Know before you go

Stay in Nice, Menton or neighbouring Beausoleil and come in by train or bus; rooms are far cheaper, and Monaco is only about 20 minutes from Nice.

Check your phone plan before arriving: Monaco is outside the EU, and UK networks often charge separately for roaming there even when France is included.

Avoid Grand Prix week unless you are coming for the race: prices multiply, roads close and grandstands block views for days before and after.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.